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LADY BABY.

CHAPTER IV.—SIR PETER.

"Love guided not his hand, content to see
Mere beauty, as of sunset hills or skies."

At Maud's exclamation, Lady Agnes and Lady Catherine looked at each other with a start; Lord Kippendale turned a shade redder, and Lady Baby grew almost pale.

"Miss Epperton!" said Sir Peter, with a look of unmistakable pleasure, "this is almost too good to be true! What happy skies have you dropped from?"

"Only from some very damp and grey ones, I am afraid," said Maud, laughing. She no longer looked tired, and a delicate and most becoming flush had sprung to her cheek.

"Do you know, it is not five minutes since I was wondering how you could be conjured to the spot, and yet I had no glimpse of an idea that you were in the North. I shall begin to believe in magnetism. Will you kindly introduce me to your friends?"

Miss Epperton's hosts had stood by, looking rather haughty and feeling very miserable. Now, as though with one accord, they scanned Sir Peter's face, to mark what effect the discovery of their identity would have upon him. It had none whatever; he neither winced nor changed colour, and his easy and confident manner grew neither stiff nor suspicious. There was not a shade of constraint on his handsome, high-bred face as he cordially shook hands with Lord Kippendale and raised his hat to the ladies; and yet Miss Epperton had very distinctly pronounced the inimical name. Sir Peter was a tall, somewhat loosely built man, of some seven or eight and twenty, with a pair of rather dreamy grey eyes, a careless and yet cordial smile, and a finely cut nose and chin.

"It is I who ought to apologise," he said, in answer to Lord Kippendale, who was taking great trouble to explain that this meeting had not been intentional. "I know that I have no right to be in the outer park on Tuesdays, but that bit of mist against the hill tempted me out, and I did not think that any one would brave the weather to-day. There! was that not the first drop?"

It was the first drop, and the second, and the third.

"Come, girls, hurry up!" said Lord Kippendale, much relieved. "There is no use in getting drenched."

"None whatever," assented Sir Peter. "Can I help you to open your umbrella, Miss Epperton? Let me hold it for you." And Miss Epperton and Sir Peter under one umbrella led the way.

"To the left, to the left!" Lord Kippendale called after them, still struggling with his own umbrella. "You are taking the wrong turning; the carriages are to the left."

"But we are not going to the carriages," called back Sir Peter.

"In goodness' name, where to?"

"To the house, of course: you surely do not mean to drive home through the deluge that is coming?"

"To the house?—eh, what?" repeated Lord Kippendale, much flurried by the struggle with his umbrella; "to the house? Which house? *Your* house?"

"To the castle," said Sir Peter, with an amused smile. "What is the matter? Have I suggested anything very dreadful?"

"Bless me, no!" said Lord Kippendale, rather lamely, overwhelmed by the sudden discovery that after all there was nothing so very terrible in the suggestion: and that the fact of their respective ancestors having run each other through with their lances as often as circumstances would permit, or of having taken a more than neighbourly interest in each other's sheepfolds, could scarcely be alleged as rational grounds for risking an attack of lumbago or rheumatism.

"I think we shall find a fire over there," Sir Peter was saying, in as unconscious a manner as though there had never been a question of as much as a single missing cow between Bevans and Wyndhursts. "And I venture to guess that your daughters would like to drive home with dry feet."

"As for my feet," said Lady Catherine, who was picking her way along looking like the picture of lady-like misery, "I don't feel as if they ever would be dry again. I wonder how it is that I never *can* get boots like other people's."

Lord Kippendale said not a word more, and the castle was steered for. The party, hurrying along for shelter, fell naturally into couples, each couple being, so to say, linked by an umbrella; and under the shelter of each umbrella, remarks, favourable and unfavourable, were passed upon Sir Peter.

"He is not hunchbacked," said Lady Baby to Mr Carbury, "and there does not seem to be anything wrong with his intellect either. I cannot imagine why he should have been kept so much out of sight. I find him very handsome."

"Do you?" said Mr Carbury, rather shortly. "I always think that fair men are a mistake."

"He ought to ride a light weight in spite of his height," said Nicky to his wife. "I'll be bound my grey mare could carry him, and I could put a stiffish price on if Wyndhurst were the buyer. I'm short of cash just now. You must get the governor to raise your allowance. Look

here, Aggie! you're so slow about getting the governor to raise your allowance. And you must speak to him yourself next time. Kippendale has a way of being short with me; I don't always feel like tackling Kippendale."

"Yes, Nicky," said Agnes. She was never known to say "No, Nicky."

"Never was so taken aback in my life," Lord Kippendale was saying to his daughter Catherine. "If it wasn't for the loss of time, I should have protested against the arrangement; but that young fellow has such a way about him—seems to take it all for granted. How long will it take you to dry your feet? Five minutes!—eh!"

Catherine thought privately that it would take much longer, so she contented herself with an evasive reply.

The subject of these comments was likewise indulging in umbrella confidences. "So I appeared like the wolf in the fable," said Miss Epperton. "Speak of—well, of somebody very black, and you will see his tail."

"Or else speak of the sun, and *on en voit les rayons.* I have stuck fast in Clytemnestra since your last sitting; when am I to have another?"

"*Are* you to have another? That appears to me to be the first point to be settled."

"It appears to me to be nothing of the sort. You promised to sit for Clytemnestra; and as long as I have not put the last touch to Clytemnestra's last eyelash, the engagement is not terminated. My easel and I shall haunt your footsteps until that end is reached. How long do you stay in these parts?"

"Not very long; so if your easel and you are really so determined——"

"We are. And as for the costume, it has occurred to me that a red scarf might look better than a green one. What made me think of it was that dress which you wore at Lady Euphrosyne's" (he always called his stepmother Lady Euphrosyne) "last month. I can't describe it, but it was all in tints. Pardon an artist's rudeness if I say that never, either before or since, have I seen you look so well."

"All in tints," repeated Maud, meditatively; "was that the evening that you took me in to dinner?"

"I am not certain; yes, to be sure it was. I distinctly remember what I suffered from the effects of that sickly blue-and-yellow garment opposite, and how your red dress felt just like a tonic by contrast. It is positively wicked of women not to match their colours properly."

"Oh," said Maud, but her voice sounded rather less buoyant. "Yes, I remember the evening: you brought me such a lovely red rose after dinner, I could not think where you had got it from."

Sir Peter laughed. "Well, it wasn't likely to be missed from Lady Euphrosyne's flower-vases, and it just wanted that to make the scale of colour in your dress complete. You can't think how well it looked against the red velvet."

Maud said nothing this time. A slight, very slight but yet perceptible damp had fallen upon her spirits. It was gratifying that Sir Peter should so vividly recall her dress, but it would have been more gratifying if he had been quite sure about having taken her down to dinner that night.

"I ignore what the resources of the house may be," said Sir Peter, when the dripping visitors

stood at length in the drawing-room. "Lady Euphrosyne has got the housekeeper with her in London, and I, a lonely and neglected bachelor, have been living *incog.* for a week; but I suppose it is not reckless to offer tea."

"As for pouring it out," he declared, when the tea had appeared, "I must throw myself on the mercy of whichever of the ladies will be good enough to play hostess."

The Ladies Bevan shrank back instinctively. This was really too much to be expected from any Bevan. An awkward pause appeared imminent, when, just at the right moment, Maud Epperton stepped up to the table and commenced to place the cups and distribute the sugar. The others sat round the tea-table, feeling and looking rather frigid, and concentrating their chief attention upon the fine collection of sporting pictures, chiefly portraits, which covered the walls.

"Never mind about the tea not being strong, Miss Epperton," said Lord Kippendale, in a fever of half-suppressed impatience. "We can't keep the horses standing much longer; we really can't, Sir Peter."

"But you will have to wait till they are put in again," said Sir Peter, quietly. "I gave orders that they should be taken to the stables."

"I am glad of that," broke in Lady Baby, "for there is nothing so bad for old horses as standing in puddles of water; it very often makes their legs swell. What do you use for your horses' legs, Sir Peter?"

"I beg your pardon," said Sir Peter, turning from Miss Epperton, and for the first time becoming clearly aware of Lady Baby's existence. "You said something about horses' legs?"

"Do you find arnica or fluid best?"

"For feeding them with?" asked Sir Peter.

"Good heavens, no! for rubbing their legs with, of course. What do you rub their legs with after a hard day's hunting?"

"I don't rub them," said Sir Peter.

"You don't do it yourself, I daresay," with a gesture of impatience at his slowness of comprehension; "but surely you must know what you use on hunting-days."

"But," said Sir Peter, "I don't hunt."

"Don't hunt!" repeated every Bevan in the room, and there was a pause, almost of consternation. Lady Baby recovered first.

"To be sure; I forgot. You have been out of the way of it lately; you could only have hunted dolphins in the Mediterranean, and ridden upon sea-horses. How you must have missed it! What a trial it must have been!"

"Scarcely so much as if I had been at home," said Sir Peter, with a peculiar smile hovering about his lips.

Lady Baby felt remorseful. Did his health forbid him to hunt? And had her question unwittingly touched on a sore spot? And to a Wyndhurst how sore a spot it must be! "Well, this season is over," she said, hurriedly, "and there is time enough before next; but we have some lovely rides about here even in summer. Don't you think so?"

"But I don't ride," said Sir Peter. Lady Baby was in the act of raising her full cup to her lips; she put it down untouched, and gazed at Sir Peter with unspeakable things in her face.

"Bless my heart!" Lord Kippendale audibly ejaculated. Lady

Agnes looked at Nicky, as if for guidance in this unlooked-for contingency; while Lady Catherine, who was resting one foot on the fender, came very near to singeing her damp skirt through sheer amazement. If Sir Peter had in this same tone of quiet unconcern announced that he could not read, the intelligence would have been received with far less agitation.

"Do you mean," asked Lady Baby, with a stern frown on her face, but in a tone which incredulous wonder rendered tremulous —"do you mean that you don't ride from choice, or from necessity?"

"Oh! from choice, entirely. I have not been on a horse since I was fifteen; and, please heaven, I shall never get on another."

The last doubt was removed. He was a Wyndhurst—and he did not ride, could not ride, did not wish to ride; had not the glimmering of an idea as to how horses' legs should be treated after a hard day's hunting; had, perhaps, never seen a fox sailing across a stubble-field, and knew naught of the keen pleasure of breaking his way through tangled brushwood in the grey of a hunting-morning. And he did not blush as he said it, even though he spoke under the shadow of his grandfather's portrait, who, in hunting-dress and spurs, frowned down from the wall, and even though his great-grandfather, on a blood-hunter, hung straight opposite.

"The fact is," he explained, as he calmly stirred his tea, "I gave up riding by the advice of my doctor."

"Ah!" There seemed to be a ray of renewed hope for his character.

"Yes; he found that riding did not agree with me."

"Not agree? What a pity! Why?"

"Because I usually fall off."

Lady Baby's lips twitched; and Lord Kippendale, after a brief struggle, burst into a hearty laugh. The first shock had been weathered, and somehow the frigidity had also disappeared.

"If the consequences are so dreadful," said Maud, who had felt rather "out of it" all this time, "I really hope that you have given up riding."

"Be quite easy on that point; I have suffered too much already. I am constitutionally timid."

Lord Kippendale caught something of a twinkle in Sir Peter's eye as he made this assertion in the most natural tone in the world; and, for some inexplicable reason, the old Earl went off into a second fit of laughter.

"But at least you used to ride," suggested Lady Baby, "when you were fifteen."

"Yes, I used to ride," said Sir Peter, gloomily; "I am not likely to forget it. There were hurdles put up on the lawn for my special benefit, and an artificial stream dug in the park, a very wide and deep stream; I know, alas! how deep, for I have often lain at the bottom. I was made miserable with a succession of the most vicious ponies that the world ever produced. My father gave me a new riding-whip on every birthday. He seemed to think that perseverance would engraft the taste. But it was no use; life used to be a burden to me on hunting-days. But that is over now, thanks to Providence, and I have survived."

"This is dreadful," thought Lady Baby, "and he seems quite hardened too. I shall say something rude if we stay much longer. Ah, there is the carriage at last!"

While they were putting on their cloaks in the hall, there was something said about Clytemnestra and the sitting which Miss Epperton had promised Sir Peter, and Lord Kippendale was heard to make some hospitable speeches. He could scarcely do less, after the way in which the afternoon had shaped itself.

"Ugh!" growled Nicky, as they started homeward, "and I had just made up my mind that eight hundred would not be too stiff a price to ask for the mare. But I may whistle for eight hundred pounds now."

"Of course that quite explains the cloud under which he lived," Lady Baby in the second carriage was saying to her father; "no wonder his father kept him out of sight."

Lord Kippendale was still gently shaking with laughter. Curiously and contradictorily enough, something about Sir Peter had rather tickled the fancy of the old fox-hunting Earl. "I'm not at all so sure that I would have kept him out of sight if I had been his father," he retorted; "I always thought Sir Anthony was a bit of a fool."

"Papa!" said Lady Baby, aghast, "you don't mean to say that you actually *like* him? A man who dares to say that he is constitutionally timid?"

"*Dares*,—yes, that's the word; that's where it lies. I don't know whether he is constitutionally timid or not, my dear, but that I do know that it would need a precious deal less pluck to take a post and rails with an unexplored ditch on the other side and half the field pushing behind you, than to be a Wyndhurst and quietly tell a room full of Bevans that you can't ride. I wouldn't have done it for a thousand pounds, and there are not many fences that I have funked in my day."

CHAPTER V.—CLEOPATRA.

"Thine eyes so bright
Bereft my sight
When first I viewed thy face."

The old schoolroom at Kippendale, in which no more lessons were now learnt since Lady Baby had decided that her education was finished, had sunk almost to the level of a lumber-room. Grammars and histories had begun to grow a little musty on the shelves for want of being opened, the tinted maps on the wall were fading to a uniform yellow, and the ancient pianoforte, on which scales used daily to be strummed, had long since been finally locked, and even the key had gone astray. But, on a certain day in April, this ancient haunt of learning found itself invaded, and filled unexpectedly with light and colour. Chests had been opened and cupboards ransacked; and now, over the well-worn chairs, over the ink-spotted table and locked-up pianoforte, there lay a disorderly but brilliant mass of silk and velvet, of dresses and mantles, of bits of gold brocade, faded scarves, and old-fashioned fans, while an earnest discussion was in progress.

Maud Epperton had suggested that to get up tableaux would be an excellent way of killing time in this rainy weather; and Lady Baby once having caught at the excitement of the idea, every one else submitted.

"I have never seen tableaux in my life," said Lady Baby, "so I will take your advice about everything. You know all about the grouping and arranging, I suppose?"

"I am afraid I don't," said Miss Epperton, shaking her head; "we should require some one experienced."

"Oh, then, ask Mr Carbury; he is sure to know. He does nothing now, but he seems to have done everything in the world and to have grown tired of it. I wonder, by the by, why he has not grown tired of Kippendale yet."

"I doubt whether Mr Carbury would be a satisfactory stage-director," said Maud; "he is not enough of an artist."

Naturally the mention of the word artist led to the mention of Sir Peter; and presently it was decided that Sir Peter should be asked over to Kippendale. He had been at the house already on two different occasions, on each of which Miss Epperton had sat to him for Clytemnestra. But Clytemnestra was now finished, and, though the intercourse thus begun was not likely to die out immediately, still Maud considered that the tableaux had been a very happy thought. Tableaux could not be discussed in one day; so when Sir Peter was asked to come and stay a week at Kippendale, he found it quite natural, and came readily—so readily that Maud's heart beat high with hope.

"This is quite a new groove to be getting into with Nolesworth," said Lord Kippendale, rather surprised at himself after he had given the invitation; "but I suppose that, if he does not mind coming, there is no reason why we should mind having him."

It was strange how the old prejudice faded when once looked at in this new light which chance—or Maud Epperton—had thrown upon it; like the outward shell of a barrier which has long been rotten at the core, and which wants but one resolute touch to crumble it into dust. Perhaps the barrier fell all the more readily because of Sir Peter's absolute unconsciousness of its ever having existed. There were one or two points which in the very beginning of this renewed intercourse Lady Baby and her sisters instinctively avoided, as being possibly a little awkward for both parties; amongst these were all references to Border history or to private executions. Such topics as horse-stealing or cattle-lifting were by common consent regarded as delicate, and not to be selected as subjects of conversation. The remains of the old wall round the garden were *not* pointed out to Sir Peter, as they were to most visitors; and the pile of old song-books on the chair was hastily stuffed into a cupboard. It might just as well have remained where it was. If Sir Peter had any views at all about the old feud, they were of a sort which were not likely to produce fresh bloodshed. "Do you know, I think that would be almost *paintable*," he said to Lady Baby one day, after she had, half reluctantly, half defiantly, been giving him the history of the stump of an old broadsword which had attracted his attention among a miscellaneous collection of weapons in the hall. "One of *my* ancestors broke it on the head of one of *your* ancestors," veracity compelled Lady Baby to acknowledge. "You don't say so!" said Sir Peter, quite cordially. "That shows that your ancestors used very inferior steel, or else that my ancestors had very superior

skulls." And then he listened to the account of the single combat by moonlight, and at the end made the remark about the incident being "paintable." In face of this unconsciousness the consciousness of his new friends could not fail to dwindle. "And as for the riding," reflected Lord Kippendale, as he tried to puzzle out the situation, "that's his own loss, and not ours; and it would be almost absurd to have found fault with the father and grandfather because they rode too well, and then to find fault with the son because he does not ride at all." After the lapse of ten days, this fact of Sir Peter not riding was contemplated rather more calmly; and though the discovery was hard to get over, and though he must always be looked upon as a degenerate descendant of his booted and spurred ancestors, still it had been tacitly agreed that, since he was not as he should be, he had better be taken as he was. Lady Baby had indeed attempted to open his eyes to his shortcomings, but she succeeded only in discovering still deeper depths of degradation.

"Why on earth should I want to hunt a fox?" he answered, quite unmoved by a panegyric on the noblest of sports; "the fox doesn't want to hunt me."

"You might as well say that partridges don't want to shoot you, and yet you shoot partridges."

"No, I don't."

"Well, then, grouse or woodcock; it doesn't matter which."

"No, it doesn't in the least matter," said Sir Peter, "because I don't shoot any of them. I am not quite sure that I know what a grouse is like, with its feathers on."

"Good heavens! Do you fish?"

"No"

"Sir Peter, Sir Peter, this is awful!" cried Lady Baby. "Do you mean to say that you absolutely kill *nothing*?"

"Not unless it wants to kill me."

After this his case was regarded as hopeless. But presently it was conceded that, though he would be useless with either a gun or a whip in his hand, still he might do well enough with a lead-pencil. He was holding one now, while he sat in judgment on the brocaded gowns presented for his approval, and, with a few rough strokes, was sketching the proposed arrangement of figures.

"Everything depends on catching each person's artistic possibilities," he explained, "and every one has artistic possibilities of some sort; it all lies in finding them out. Now, Lady Agnes's possibilities lie in the Anglo-Saxon line, and Lady Catherine requires a weeping-willow."

"And what do I require?" asked Maud.

"A Grecian tiara or an oriental veil. I suppose you are tired of dressing up as Clytemnestra. What do you say to Helen of Troy?"

"And Paris?"

"I fear you must do without a Paris. There is no one with the artistic possibilities of a Paris among us. Paris must positively be under twenty-four."

"Germaine is under twenty-four," said Lady Catherine; "and of course, just because we want him, he is not here. Could we not wait for him? He is to be back next week."

"It would be a pity to delay longer," said Maud, quickly. That absent boy was not the Paris she wished to see at her feet.

"No," said Lady Baby, "we can't delay, even for Germaine. I have quite made up my mind

that the tableaux are to be this week."

Sir Peter made no remark, but looked at her rather curiously She caught the glance.

"Are you weighing my artistic possibilities? What are they?"

"I should give you a crown," said Sir Peter, thoughtfully, "and a sceptre; but it should be a toy crown and a toy sceptre, and I should surround you with broken playthings and ill-treated dolls; and the name—well, the name of the picture should be, 'The Nursery Tyrant,' or something equivalent."

"Sir Peter!" she cried, facing him with indignant eyes, "you surely forget that I am not a child!"

"I should never be rude enough to forget anything of the sort," said Sir Peter, quite unmoved; "I was only talking of your artistic possibilities."

She threw up her head. Something in Sir Peter's tone had touched her almost like a skilfully conveyed lesson, and to Lady Baby the most distant hint of admonition or control was a thing unendurable. She was not used to it; how should she be?

"Proud as well as headstrong," thought Sir Peter, as he watched her. "What a strange child! It is a pity they have spoiled her."

"I don't like your artistic possibility," she said, with a petulant elevation of her chin.

"Then here is another; it has occurred to me this instant. If you will put this on for a moment, I will show you the other side of the medal, as the French say;" and Sir Peter picked up from the heap of things beside him a soft scarlet cap, which looked almost like the typical *bonnet rouge* of the Reign of Terror. "It fits you, does it not? Now, don't you feel as if you could cry '*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité! A bas l'ordre; à bas les lois!*' We could call it 'the Spirit of Revolt.'"

"Oh, Sir Peter!" said Lady Agnes, "how can you say such things, even in joke? What would we be without laws? It is such a comfort to be told what to do."

"Another artistic possibility!" cried Sir Peter, as he caught her look of distress—the distress of a yoked creature that likes its yoke, and would not know how to move without it. "Allow me to place you on the picture as well, and then we can call it 'Revolution and Order.'"

"No!" cried Lady Baby abruptly, flinging the red cap to the ground: "I will not play that part. Of course I have not got Agnes's mania for doing what I am told; but I—I feel as if you were laughing at me, and—and treating me like a child. Think of something else."

The discussion grew prolonged. Somebody asked what Mr Carbury was to be. "I think he had better be a corpse," said Sir Peter, calmly eyeing his intended victim as though debating inwardly as to whether he would look to most advantage with a jewelled dagger sheathed in his heart, or with half-a-dozen arrows artistically disposed about his person. Mr Carbury tried to look civilly amused, but failed. The tableaux irritated him: it was not he who had proposed them, and there were, besides, certain vague misgivings which troubled his mind. A satin doublet would, no doubt, suit him admirably; but it could scarcely fail to suggest that odious comparison to an Italian baritone which in the course of his life had caused him so much real

mental suffering. A long cloak would have draped his tall figure gloriously, had he only not feared to look too thoroughly at home in it. If Mr Carbury had been possessed of one grain of vulgar coxcombry, he would have blithely donned both doublet and cloak, undisturbed by any such fine-drawn scruples; but his vanity was of far too fastidious as well as too deep-rooted a sort, to glory in any mere dressing-up or display. A dread of ridicule may not always be a healthy mental sign, but it did Mr Carbury at least the good service of preserving him from a host of minor absurdities. Nobody ever saw him ogling himself in mirrors, or affectionately twirling his moustache, or complacently smoothing his necktie. And thus it happened that in general he did not pass for a vain man, and that none but very shrewd people suspected the overweening self-esteem which was his ruling passion.

When Mr Carbury had with some difficulty been fitted with a part, a difficulty which arose precisely from the ease with which he would have fitted into so many parts, Launcelot and Elaine were suggested for Sir Peter and Lady Baby. Maud, busied with some lace she was mending for one of the costumes, began to grow uneasy. It was not for this that she had brought Sir Peter to Kippendale.

"Are the pictures all settled," she asked serenely, "all but mine?"

"Yes, all but yours—that is to say, all but the gem of the collection," answered Sir Peter, "for of course, Miss Epperton, you will make far the best picture of any of us. Helen of Troy must be discarded for want of a Paris; besides, I should prefer to make a single-figure study of you. How about Cleopatra? Ah! that flash of your eye settles it; I saw visions of Egypt in that glance. Yes, you shall be Cleopatra, the Cleopatra of the 'Dream of Fair Women,' 'brow-bound with burning gold.' It is true that your cheeks are not 'swarthy,' but we will not stick at a shade of complexion; and here is the very dress, gold brocade. Miss Epperton, excuse me for saying that you will be magnificent."

"He is talking of my artistic possibilities," thought Maud, with a sigh. "Well, let it be," she said aloud. It had occurred to her that if Sir Peter himself were disengaged during the tableau in which she appeared, he would have a far better chance of viewing her in her costume.

"We shall keep it for our last picture, our crowning triumph," said Sir Peter. "I want the effect to be dazzling. The brocade is splendid, but we must have jewels; there must be a glitter, a glamour, over Cleopatra—a vague suggestion of half the wealth of Egypt being on her back. In my mind the idea of the Egyptian queen is inseparable from the idea of 'beaten gold,' and 'divers-coloured fans,' and 'strange invisible perfume.' We must load Cleopatra with gems."

"Provided we have them," suggested Mr Carbury.

"Every one must contribute what they have," said Lady Baby. "I have some sapphires; and, oh Agnes, to be sure, the diamonds! I will fetch them."

Five minutes later Lady Baby was back in the room, holding in her hand a red-morocco case, in which lay a row of single diamonds of the first water, the same which Lady Agnes had worn on the evening of Mr Carbury's coming to Kippendale

"Oh!" was all that Miss Epperton could say, and again, "oh!" It is a strange fact that even strong-minded women are apt to become weak-minded in face of a diamond necklace. The brilliant fire which flashed from the case as it opened, quite took away her speech for a moment. She had never seen such diamonds. "Oh, Lady Agnes, am I really to wear these?"

"They are not Agnes's, and you are to wear them," said Lady Baby; "they belong to Germaine's wife."

"His wife? But he is not married?"

"Of course not; but he will be some day, and then the diamonds go to her, whoever she is."

"Lucky creature!" said Miss Epperton, as she softly lifted the glittering string. The very glitter somehow gave to Lady Baby's absent brother a greater importance than he had hitherto worn in Maud Epperton's eyes.

"It was about these diamonds that you once promised me a tragical story," said Mr Carbury; "was it not?"

"A tragical story?" cried Maud. "Oh, let us have it!"

"By all means, let us have it," said Sir Peter, sinking into a chair; "a little tragedy will be quite refreshing after so much art. Once upon a time——"

"Once upon a time," began Lady Baby, "papa had an elder brother, who was not married but who was engaged to be married, and he bought a diamond necklace for his bride. It was sent to him from London——"

"And was stolen out of the post-bag?" suggested Maud.

"No; it reached him quite safely, and he locked it away in an iron safe in the wall."

"Which safe? The one downstairs?"

"Oh no; the safe is hundreds of miles away. This did not happen at Kippendale, but at Gullyscoombe."

"And what is Gullyscoombe?"

"Gullyscoombe is what papa calls his useful estate. It is a hideous piece of land, I believe, but none of us have ever seen it; fortunately, it is very far away. But there is copper on it, you know; and all our money comes from it, somehow," added Lady Baby, with magnificent vagueness.

"And yet you have never seen it?" said Maud, reflectively. "I wonder you never go there, by way of a change."

"Go there! Go to Gullyscoombe!" from the three sisters, in different tones of horror.

"Why," said Lady Baby, "papa has only been there twice in his life himself, and each time he came away in a hurry—because he thought he would be driven to drowning himself in the sea, which came up close to his window at high tide. He calls Gullyscoombe the most God-forsaken spot between the four seas of Britain."

It was thus that Gullyscoombe was invariably spoken of in the family. The distant estate on the sea-coast of the English county of Choughshire was regarded almost as a necessary evil; while the valuable produce of its copper-mines, which they had never seen and never wished to see, made life easy and luxurious for them, and was lavished open-handed on the beloved Kippendale.

"But was your uncle fond of God-forsaken places?" asked Maud; "or why did he live at Gullyscoombe?"

"Uncle Ronald was a dreadful martinet about business; and as he was going to be married, he had gone down to Gullyscoombe

to look after his affairs. It was something about Wheal Tallyho (that was an old mine, you know) coming to an end, or shares being transferred, or something of that sort; but of course he came up here once a-week for the hunting. He started on one of these journeys on the day after he had locked away the diamonds, and as soon as he was gone the safe was robbed."

"By a servant, I suppose?"

"Well, yes, by a sort of servant. Uncle Ronald never took more than one real servant with him when he went to Gullyscoombe, and that was Adam, the old groom, who is still with us; but there was a man upon the place, a very handy sort of a fellow, who led a kind of mixed existence, and who was sometimes a miner, and sometimes a fisherman, and sometimes anything else that turned up. And whenever there was any extra work to be done, and Christopher Swan—that was his name—did not happen to be either mining or fishing, then he was called in to do it. It was partly out of charity that Uncle Ronald used to employ him, for though he was a regular Jack-of-all-trades, he never seemed to prosper in anything he tried. He had lost one eye from a blast-hole exploding in his face; and though he was sharp in some ways, he was not always very rational—people said that came from the mast of a fishing-boat having fallen on his head when he was a child. In general, people disliked him and were rather afraid of him. I am not sure that they didn't think he was a sort of sorcerer; at any rate they all seem to have believed that he possessed the power of finding metals with the divining-rod. There really seems to have been something uncanny about him. But Uncle Ronald never had any patience with what he called fanciful prejudices, and he often had Christopher Swan in the house. Well, on one of these occasions when Christopher had been engaged for a week, the overseer, who lived in the house, heard a noise and found the safe-door open. This was on the night after Uncle Ronald's departure. Everybody turned out except Christopher Swan, who had disappeared. Next they noticed that the boat had been unmoored and was gone. There were more boats got, and the thief was pursued; but they found nothing, and two days afterwards the boat came drifting back, keel uppermost. The thief had been drowned."

"Well, but the diamonds?" asked Maud, bewildered; "they could not have come back with the boat, and they were not drowned, since I hold them in my hands. Or did your uncle buy another necklace for his bride?"

"Poor Uncle Ronald! No; his bride did not need another necklace, for she never married him. He did not get back to Gullyscoombe again; he broke his neck out hunting. And now comes the mysterious part of the story. I told you that there was a groom in the house, too: he had been away with Uncle Ronald at the time of the robbery. A few months later, he married the niece of one of the fishermen near Gullyscoombe. Her name was Molly, and she was very pretty. Uncle Ronald used to call her the Destroying Angel, because she used to have a new sweetheart every week. Papa, when he succeeded to the title, had kept Adam in his service. One day, several months later, there was a great noise heard in

the stable-yard, and Adam burst into papa's room dragging his wife by the hand: she was staring and pale as a sheet, and round her neck she had—guess what!"

"The diamonds!'

"Yes, the diamonds. Adam had surprised her kneeling before her open box, and looking at herself in a glass inside the lid. He had taken her by the hand, and dragged her, just as she was, through the stable-yard, before all the stable-boys, and he actually flung her down at papa's feet, diamonds and all. She did nothing but cry at first, but at last she confessed that Christopher Swan had given her the diamonds as a present, but that she had not known where he had taken them from. She was so awfully silly about it that papa half thought of forgiving her, but Adam took her by the two shoulders and turned her out of the house-door; and she never came back. She died a great many years ago in London."

"And could she throw any light on the fate of the unfortunate Christopher!" asked Sir Peter. "How had he conveyed the diamonds to her!"

"Oh, I suppose she helped him in the robbing. Christopher Swan must, of course, have been drowned; he has never been heard of since."

"A curious story," said Maud, still gazing at the diamonds. "It is evident that the Destroying Angel had a large choice of victims, and it is conceivable that she should have preferred the man with two eyes to the man with one. Well, it does not much matter now; the upshot of it is, that the diamonds are here, and that I am to wear them as Cleopatra." And the talk drifted from the one-eyed miner back to the Egyptian queen.

The mention of the diamond robbery had been purely casual, and the tragedy of Christopher Swan was spoken of as a thing accomplished and done with. It did not cross the mind of either Lady Baby, the teller of the story, or that of any of her listeners, that there might yet remain one act of the tragedy to be played out, or rather that the play was to have an after-play destined to influence the lives of more than one of the persons assembled to-day in the old schoolroom at Kippendale.

The evening fixed for the tableaux happened to be the same on which Lord Germaine was expected home. It had been calculated that he would be able to get down from the station in time to form one of the spectators. But whether it was that the train was late, or the horses slow, or the clocks in the house fast, nine o'clock had struck before there was any sign of his appearance. The invited guests, consisting of two or three fox-hunting squires, and about as many agricultural lairds, with their wives and daughters, had already taken their places before the curtain; while behind it Mr Carbury, in the character of a slain knight bewailed by his bride on the battle-field, was beginning to discover that wooden boards can be very hard indeed.

"This will never do," said Lord Kippendale, after having pulled out his watch fifty times in the course of five minutes; "we cannot wait any longer. Germaine has only himself to thank for his unpunctuality. For goodness' sake, let us not sit here for ever! Up with the curtain!"

The curtain went up and discovered Mr Carbury and Catherine.

"Well done, Kate!" cried Lord Kippendale delighted, amidst the

murmur of applause. "Wailing and dishevelled, eh? she looks it to the very life;" for Lady Catherine indeed revelled in the becoming despair of her *rôle*.

"But who is Launcelot?" was whispered round the circle, as the curtain next rose on Launcelot and Elaine; Elaine with her hands outstretched and her blue eyes uplifted to Launcelot, as she received the sacred shield in keeping. There were many present to whom the young baronet was still a stranger.

"It is Sir Peter Wyndhurst," said Lord Kippendale, stroking his chin rather thoughtfully; and immediately it was whispered round the circle, "It is Sir Peter Wyndhurst." And more than one glance of surprise was interchanged, and some people said to themselves, "Lord Kippendale is turning over a new leaf;" others, "What a tall man Sir Peter is!" while yet others wondered whether Sir Peter's good looks were entirely owing to the helmet, or whether some of them were his own.

"Your daughter looks lovely," whispered the lady next Lord Kippendale.

"Eh? Yes: but I wonder she can stand so still; she doesn't so much as blink—yes, there she is blinking; holloa! what was that?"

The shield had fallen to the ground with a clatter, and Launcelot, springing forward, pulled down the curtain.

"Did you find it too heavy?" asked Sir Peter, turning to where Lady Baby stood, looking equally ready to laugh or cry.

"Yes—no; it was papa's talking that put me out. I wish people would not make remarks aloud. I felt quite hot all of a sudden."

"Is the room too warm?"

"No, it was not the room, it was the blinking; how could I help blinking?"

"I told you that did not signify; why, even a photographer allows people to blink. It is all right, as long as you look straight into my face."

"But I don't want to look straight into any one's face."

"It is an artistic necessity," urged Sir Peter. "There! they want the curtain up for the second view. Are you ready?"

"No, I will not do it again; tell them that I will not."

"As you like," said Sir Peter, quietly.

"Well, then; for the next picture!" Another picture and then another were displayed, and then the last had been reached. But this time the preparatory pause was longer, for Sir Peter was almost over-fastidious about the finishing touches of this picture. All the other tableaux had embraced two or more figures, but this was one solitary resplendent apparition—the Cleopatra which Sir Peter had so studiously planned, and on which Maud Epperton had, so to say, staked her last chance. It was the illustration of Tennyson's lines:—

"Then, turning, saw I one who sat
Upon a crimson scarf unrolled;
A Queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold."

"There now, Miss Epperton," said Sir Peter, as he settled the last fold of her drapery, "you are absolutely perfect, all but the direction of your eyes. Look towards the public, but not at them: let your gaze pass over their heads and fix it on some distinct point, say the door, for instance. You will find that a help. And try to think that the door is not a door,

but some slave whose allegiance you are claiming. Shall I give the signal?"

He gave the signal. But this time, as the curtain rose, instead of the admiring murmur, there was a minute of complete silence. No one was at all prepared for the effect Maud would produce; her beauty was of that sort which can be almost incalculably enhanced by gaslight and costume. And here every advantage had been lavished, every point had been weighed. The severe lines of her flowing robe gave to her splendid figure an almost statuesque perfection, while the dusky waves of her unbound hair fell round her like a mantle. With one beautiful arm half raised, and her crimson lips just parted, as though in the act of speaking, she sat immovable, and nothing but the quiver of the diamonds on her neck and the brilliancy of her dark eyes showed that she was no statue.

A burst of applause followed upon the first silence of surprise. Recovered from their amazement, the fox-hunting squires and the agricultural lairds, imagining that they had become young again, clapped their hands with vigour and shouted themselves hoarse with approbation. And in the midst of the noise the door opened unnoticed, and a curly-haired young giant in a travelling-coat stood on the threshold, and stared, and rubbed his eyes, and stared again, wondering how it was that he had never before seen anything as beautiful as that glittering vision, whose eyes, bright with triumph, were looking straight into his, and asking himself whether she was a woman, or whether in the next minute she would melt back to empty air. And then Lady Baby sprang out from behind the scenes, crying—

"Germaine has come! Here is Germaine at last!"

CHAPTER VI.—CLEOPATRA AT HOME.

"Judge not thy friend until thou standest in his place."

Maud Epperton sat before her toilet-glass, and with thoughtful eyes gazed into its depths. She was still Cleopatra, "brow-bound with burning gold," and the diamonds still glittered on her neck. Though every one in the house was long since asleep, she lingered as though unwilling to part with one jot of her Egyptian splendour.

And yet it was not of her Egyptian splendour she was thinking as she sat there quite still, meeting her own gaze in the glass, her head a little bent, and her arms, laden with bracelets, resting on the toilet-table. Her thoughts were travelling back over the last few weeks—were passing each day in a sort of cursory review, until they halted on one especial day, which stood out branded with a mark of its own. Nothing could have been more different, more wide apart to all appearances, than that day and this present one; and yet it was exactly the brilliancy of this evening which sent back her thoughts straight to the gloom of that other one. They were linked by an invisible thread. The other had been the cause, this was the effect.

How dark it had been, how chill and damp, as she peered through the blurred window of the fly which was taking her from the station to her aunt's lodging,

and what a time she had stood shivering on the doorstep before the well-known slip-slap of the lodging-house servant's down-trodden shoes had been heard coming along the passage. Up a steep staircase Maud had dragged herself wearily — up several steep staircases, until she reached the flat occupied by her spinster aunt, the elder Miss Epperton. The kitchen on this flat had a window which received its light through the passage, and there were various half-jars of butter and remains of cold pudding standing on the sill inside. A light burned dimly within, and some one was moving about the hearth.

"She has not waited dinner for me," said Maud, as she looked through the window; and then, slowly and reluctantly, she pushed open the door. A minute later she stood in her aunt's sitting-room. The sitting-room was the dining-room as well—the big round table in the middle being cleared three times a-day to make room for dishes and glasses. At this round table Maud's aunt was sitting, having just finished eating her soup, and putting in a few stitches to a stripe of sky blue crochet-work, while waiting for Sarah-Ann to bring in the Irish stew. At the sound of the opening door she looked over her spectacles at Maud, then put in the six remaining stitches to the row she was working, and then only laid down the stripe and gazed deliberately at her niece.

"So you are back?" she said, blankly and drearily.

"Yes, I am back," said Maud, in a tone which betrayed nothing but the indifference of fatigue. "Did you not get my telegram?"

"Yes, I got your telegram. I suppose Sarah-Ann has put sheets on your bed. I told her to."

"And the soup would have spoiled, of course, by standing five minutes longer," said Maud, with a touch of irritation.

"The soup would have spoiled, probably; it was singed at any rate, by reason, I suppose, of Sarah-Ann having to look after your room. What makes you come down here in this way, like a thunderbolt? You may be used to flying about like a rocket, but I am not used to having rockets fly at me. What makes you come down here at all? Couldn't you have written? What is the good of spending a shilling instead of a penny? I detest telegrams."

"I had no time to write," said Maud, sinking into a chair and pulling her hat from off her aching head: "it was only this morning that the Oakhams finally made up their minds to go to Paris. I had only just time to send off that telegram and pack up my things."

"And why didn't the Oakhams take you to Paris with them? They took you to Bournemouth last year; and the difference of the ticket wouldn't be much to *them*. Are they tired of you?"

"Very likely they are," said Maud, with a smile that looked dangerous: "they have another daughter out this year, too."

"And what has become of the Bailies and the Belfields, and all the rest of your fine titled friends? Have they all got daughters come out too? Has London turned into a wilderness? Dear, dear! who ever would have thought that the beautiful Miss Epperton would condescend to show her face in Brackton at this time of year? Why, the place will look quite new to you, my dear. I don't believe you have seen it by an April light since you were fifteen;

and that's a good bit back now, you know."

"The Bailies are in mourning," answered Maud, as she slowly dipped her spoon into the plate of warmed-up potato-soup which Sarah-Ann had placed before her; "and the Belfields have got their house full, and most of my other friends are either out of town or else unable to ask me just at present."

Miss Epperton the elder took up her sky-blue stripe again and held it close to the lamp. It was necessary to do so, because the wick could not be turned up high on account of the chimney being cracked.

"Yes, yes," she said, with a short and dismal laugh, "that's how it begins. In a few years more you will be quite surprised to see how full your friends' houses will be exactly at the time you want an invitation; it can't go on for ever, you know. How old are you? Thirty next birthday? No wonder they are tired of their toy; and the toy is not so pretty as it was either. You have gone off a good deal in these two last months, my dear."

Maud's eyes gleamed, but she sat quite still. After her day of hurry and travelling she felt almost too tired to be angry. Her glance strayed round the room, over the horse-hair chairs and the threadbare carpet, and towards Sarah-Ann bringing in the Irish stew. Yesterday she had dined in a room hung with peacock-blue silk, and a powdered footman had moved her plate.

"Aunt Sophy," she said suddenly, "what has become of the piano?"

"Sold," was the short reply.

"Sold? Good gracious! why?"

"Because I wanted the money. Do you wish for any more reasons? If you do, I can give you one—they've raised the rent."

"Oh!" Maud sank back despondently on her chair.

"So if you want to practise your waltzes, you will have to do it elsewhere."

"But the rent is paid this term?"

"Yes, the rent is paid this term, thanks to keeping down the butcher's bill and not having the fire put on till the afternoon. But the rent won't be paid next term if there's a second mouth to feed. How long have you come for?"

The question was not put roughly, scarcely harshly; it was put only with that dreary hopelessness which has no room for sentiment.

"I don't know," said Maud, with a hysterical laugh. "Are you going to turn me out of doors?"

"No. For one thing, I don't suppose you would go. You may have a deal of pride about you, my dear, but it doesn't often interfere with your convenience. You wouldn't be here to-night if it did."

"Oh, Aunt Sophy, where else could I have gone to?" cried Maud, with a sob. "Do not be so unmerciful! You know I have no home but this."

The elder Miss Epperton made no answer just at once, but helped herself to a very small portion of salt. Then she looked across suddenly into her niece's face. "*Why* have you no home but this?" she asked. "That's what I want to know."

Maud sat silent, looking sullenly at her plate.

"You don't play the innocent—that's one good thing. I think we both prefer plain English. Why haven't you got a husband? It's a husband's place to feed his wife.

I have put bread into your mouth as long as I had it, but what I haven't got I can't give; and it's no use talking of mercy or pity. If I had a house in London and ten thousand a-year, I daresay I should be very merciful, and I should be a most loving aunt, and you a most affectionate niece; but I haven't, and there's an end of it. And it's no use pretending that it is a joy to me to have you on my hands—for it is not. And if I am to come to a crust of bread, which does not seem unlikely, I would a great deal rather eat it by myself than share it with any one, even if it be my brother's child."

Maud dropped her knife and fork with a clatter, and rose from her chair. "That will do, Aunt Sophy," she said, hoarsely; "that is just about as much as I can bear. I—I can't eat any more. I am going."

"Where to? The poorhouse?"

"To my room just at present; that is, the room you let me have; and afterwards, I don't know—to some place where my food is not grudged me." And snatching up her hat and gloves, Maud walked from the room.

"She will be back before the table is cleared," said Miss Sophy Epperton, nodding her head twice at the door as it fell to with a slam. But Miss Sophy Epperton was mistaken. Maud did not show herself again that evening. Though she walked so steadily from the room, she was in reality shaking all over from the excitement of overstrained nerves. The first thing she did on reaching her room was to stumble and nearly fall over the travelling trunk which had been left standing in the middle of the floor, and which, in her agitation, she did not see. There were no matches on the chimney-piece and no fire in the grate; but as there was also no curtain to the window, and a street lamp burned straight opposite, the room was not quite dark. At any rate, there was light enough for what Maud had to do, and that was merely to sit down and think, think, think of what her next step should be—which way she should turn on her lonely and precarious path in life. As she sat there before the empty grate, with her elbows on her knees and her hands pressed over her face, few people indeed would have recognised the brilliant Miss Epperton who had graced so many drawing-rooms for so many years past, who could rattle off small-talk with the best of chatterers, and smile as blithely as the most favoured child of fortune. And yet this was the real Maud Epperton as much as the other—more than the other, perhaps; for much of that brilliancy was but an outward gloss, assumed because the world will not tolerate what is dull and sad, and because Maud's only hope in life lay in keeping friends with the world.

Maud Epperton had never known her parents. She had neither brother nor sister, nor—with the exception of her aunt Sophy—near relations of any sort; and if the penniless girl had secured for herself a recognised place in London society, it was by sheer strength of her own cleverness. In default of fortune, she lived upon her wits. Her first appearance had been under the wing of a distant cousin in high life (for she was well connected on her mother's side), who, growing tired of her when after one season she had failed to make the brilliant match expected of her, had handed her on to another chaperon, from whom she had passed on to another. Thus she had struggled on in hand-

to-mouth fashion, by turns admired and slighted, taken up and dropped; and in this way she had slowly become what she was,—had learnt to stoop and dissimulate, to curry the patronage which to her meant not only balls and theatre-tickets, but also food and lodging; had taught herself to flatter women who had not the tenth particle of her beauty, to submit her judgment to that of women who had not the tenth particle of her brains; had acquired the talent of smiling with rage in her heart, and of laughing her gayest when she felt sad to death.

And was it all in vain? Were hundreds of painfully devised plans, were thousands of mortifications swallowed, were ten seasons of such grinding work as only fashion dare demand of her slaves, to result in old-maidenhood, spent in the company of Aunt Sophy's still older maidenhood? Obviously there was but one way of escape from this existence as dismal as it was humiliating, and that way was matrimony. It was strange that, with all her beauty, Maud was still Miss Epperton; and yet, perhaps, seeing the mixture in Maud's nature, it was not very strange. Had she been a little harder, she would have made a wise and worldly marriage long ago; had she been a little softer, she would probably have made a foolish one. She might have done either. On one occasion she had all but accepted a grey-haired Crœsus who, with senile ardour, had laid his riches at her feet; another time she had been half engaged to a curate with soft brown eyes and an empty pocket. But in both these cases, when it came to the point her courage had failed; she was, after all, not quite worldly enough to accept the rich old man—and she was, after all, not quite unworldly enough to marry the poor young one. She had been very young herself when both these things happened, and when she thought the matter over nowadays, she always felt quite sure that she would act just the same again as regards the curate, but she was not quite so sure now as regards the millionaire. Much in her had hardened since then, and millionaires were not so plentiful as they used to be. Most girls in her place would have thought that even a penniless husband would have been a welcome exchange for Aunt Sophy; and as the curate episode showed, Maud had come very near to thinking so herself: but on this and other occasions her very clear common-sense had saved her from wrecking her one chance in life upon any rock of mere mortification or petulance. Mortified she might feel, and petulant she could be, for those people who said that Miss Epperton was all made up of calculation judged her falsely. She was, on the contrary, all made up of impulse, only that she almost invariably withstood her impulses. And who would blame her for her common-sense? Had it not been acquired in a hard enough school? When people said, "Miss Epperton is trying to catch a rich husband," they little knew what alternative Miss Epperton had before her eyes. It was not so much that she was covetous of riches, as that she was terrified of poverty. She knew it too well, knew it with all its sordid cares and its countless worries, with all its great horrors and its little miseries: had watched how under its touch all brightness had faded from her aunt's life, how kindness had been cankered and sweetness soured, and softness pinched away by its tightening fingers,

until a woman, once fairly amiable and undoubtedly well-intentioned, had gradually turned into this snappish and hardened and prematurely withered Aunt Sophy.

And Maud knew more than this, for she had seen life in many aspects; she knew that there was a worse poverty than this, the poverty of struggling families and of hungry children — a poverty more heartbreaking, if less solitary. And thus, while many a girl without any more vocation for self-sacrifice than Maud had, would have walked blithely and blindly into an imprudent marriage, simply because she did not know what she was doing, Maud, knowing too well, preferred to remain Miss Epperton; and this is why she was able to swallow the bread which her aunt Sophy gave her without choking with shame. Such scenes as the one to-night were of no very unusual occurrence, but her aunt had never stated the case quite so brutally before; and all that there remained of pride in Maud was quivering now as though under a lash. Short of turning her niece on to the street, what more could she have said? "And it is true," said Maud, as she clasped and unclasped her trembling hands; "it is quite true; I am another mouth to feed; she cannot give me what she has not got;" and having reached this point in her reflections, Maud suddenly remembered that all she had got this evening was a few spoonfuls of singed potato-soup, and she realised all at once that she was almost faint with hunger. The vision which this discovery most distinctly conjured up before her mind's eye was that of the Irish stew which at her indignant exit she had left almost untouched upon her plate. Would it be there still? Rather cold, rather uninviting perhaps; but what of that? she *was* so hungry! "Perhaps Aunt Sophy will send me a message," she said to herself. "Perhaps Sarah-Ann will bring me something; she must know I have had no dinner,"—and for a little while after this Maud sat listening for some sound in the passage: but time passed, and all was still. Then she heard her aunt come out of the sitting-room and go into her bedroom — for Maud, busy with her thoughts, had not realised how long she had sat there. Then Sarah-Ann came along the passage and put out the lamp, and, returning to the kitchen, locked the door behind her. And then Maud's courage broke down. The full consciousness of her wretched loneliness seemed to sweep down upon her. And was it because of the awful idea of missing this season in London? or was it because she remembered that she would be thirty next birthday? or was it only because she had travelled very far and eaten very little that day? More probably it was a mixture of all these causes which made her suddenly break into a flood of scalding tears.

"My welcome!" she sobbed aloud, "my welcome home! Oh, where can I go? Yes, Aunt Sophy is right; why have I not got another home? Oh, who could give me one? who—who?"

She cried for about five minutes, and then her common-sense began to come to her aid, and suggested that the first thing to be done was to still these unbearable pangs of vulgar, physical hunger. Half blind with tears, she groped her way to her travelling-bag, and dug out from its depths a few stale sandwiches and broken biscuits

that had survived the journey. Then, with her shawl huddled round her—for the evening had grown very chill—she sat down again beside the empty grate, and ate her vagabond fare by the light of the street lamp.

She was much calmer now. The burst of tears had relieved her, and she felt better able to take a dispassionate review of her situation. Though she still kept repeating that wild query of "Who? who?" there was an answer to it already in her mind. A name stood out in her thoughts shining like a faint star of hope suggesting the bare possibility of escape. It was the name of Sir Peter Wyndhurst.

A short time before this she had met Sir Peter at his stepmother's house in London, and it had immediately become evident to her that she had produced some sort of impression upon him. His open admiration had been noted and talked of; he had followed her about for several days, and at last had asked leave to paint her portrait. But the portrait was not done when business called him away to Scotland, and Maud's hopes, which had begun to rise high, were abruptly extinguished.

So, at least, it had seemed. But now, with wits sharpened by the need of the moment, casting about for some straw of hope to catch at, she began to ask herself whether something might not yet be done. She was not in love with Sir Peter. She did not for a moment try to persuade herself that she was—for she always preferred to be honest when she could possibly afford it; but she had a distinct liking for him. He was sympathetic to her; was not that enough? She was persuaded that his wife would be a lucky woman, and this not only because he was enormously rich. This was no case of the wealthy monsters, the leering millionaires, who in bygone days had knelt at her feet. To marry Sir Peter, despite his thousands, would not even entail any distinct loss of self-respect.

That advantage, therefore, must be followed up. A very little more reflection fixed this resolve. She was quite herself again now, her figure straightened, the tears dried on her cheeks, her mind grappling with the problem in hand. It was not often that she gave way to fits of such weakness as the one she had indulged in to-night. Her judgment was in general clear and masterful, and her resolutions were ever quickly formed and carried out with spirit. Very soon she had devised the ways and means by which her project was to be carried out; she had recollected her lucky acquaintance with Lady Catherine, and determined to write a letter which should be a masterpiece of diplomacy. She was quite sure of the surprise which, despite all its diplomacy, the letter must cause, but something like despair had made her more reckless than usual.

. . . . . .

How Maud Epperton acted upon that resolution has already been told. Up to her meeting with Sir Peter all her plans had worked without a flaw; but after that point there came a check. Sir Peter's admiration was as evident as ever. How was it, then, that he did not take fire? Vanity for its own sake was a weakness which Maud never gave way to; and even before the tableaux were done rehearsing, she had pierced the question to its core, and had realised that Sir Peter's interest in her was the interest of a painter in a beautiful model.

Now, as she sat before her glass

in her rich costume, she alone awake in all the house, Maud did not mince matters in her mind.

"As regards the whole parcel of those rosy-cheeked squires," she said aloud, "I have been a success. I seemed to go to their heads like champagne. I think some of them did not walk quite straight out of the door; they will have Cleopatra on the brain for a fortnight to come. But as regards Sir Peter, I have been—let me be honest, there is no one here but my looking-glass,—I have been a failure." She said the word firmly, but in her eyes there was no failure written, rather there was something that looked like a doubtful, dawning triumph. She knew that she had gained a victory in the very moment of defeat; for, immovable as she had remained, and wrapt as she had seemed in her part, by her alone of all present the opening of the door had been noticed. With her eyes fixed on the doorway she could not help seeing the young man who stood there; she had observed his start and change of colour, had almost guessed at the very shape of the question which in his first bewilderment he had put to himself. Before any one else had even noticed that he was in the room, she had realised that he was Lord Germaine, and had said to herself, "Why, he is more than a boy—he is almost a man;" and before even she had stepped off her pedestal, an amazing thought had flashed through her mind, and unconsciously her brain was at work upon this new conception while she was still thanking Sir Peter for his help in disentangling her train.

There is a Scottish proverb which says that "when ae door steeks anither opens"; and though Maud had never heard this saying, something of this same idea was floating in her mind to-night. "I wonder what that boy looks like by daylight," she mused; "he struck me as handsome. I had not realised that he is actually twenty-three—they all talked of him as of a mere schoolboy. Heavens! how he looked at me! I wonder——" she broke off, and fell into brooding thought. "Of course, he is the only son," she said, presently; "and though I don't think they are inordinately rich, they are without doubt very comfortably off. Evidently it must all come from those copper-mines down in the south — for Kippendale, though it is very ornamental, can scarcely be productive. Why, there are no farms at all; it is all one big pleasure-ground. I wish I knew a little more about copper; and I wish, oh, I wish that I had not to take off these diamonds — they make me look quite five years younger. But it is late. Cleopatra, farewell!"

She unclasped the necklace, and held it for a minute dangling in the light. All at once she gave a short laugh—

"Germaine's wife's diamonds, to be sure! I had forgotten that. Germaine's wife's diamonds!"

CHRISTMAS EVE ON A HAUNTED HULK.

I SHALL never forget that night as long as I live.

It was during the Christmas vacation 187–. I was staying with an old college friend who had lately been appointed the curate of a country parish, and had asked me to come and cheer him up, since he could not get away at that time.

As we drove along the straight country lane from the little wayside station, it forcibly struck me that a life in such a place must be dreary indeed. I have always been much influenced by local colour; above all things, I am depressed by a dead level, and here was monotony with a vengeance. On each side of the low hedges, lichen-covered and wind-cropped, stretched bare fields, the absolute level of the horizon being only broken at intervals by some mournful tree that pointed like a decrepit finger-post towards the east, for all its western growth was nipped and blasted by the roaring south-west winds. An occasional black spot, dotted against the grey distance, marked a hay-rick or labourer's cottage, while some two miles ahead of us the stunted spire of my friend's church stood out against the wintry sky, amid the withered branches of a few ragged trees. On our right hand stretched dreary wastes of mud, interspersed here and there with firmer patches of land, but desolate and forlorn, cut off from all communication with the mainland by acres of mud and thin streaks of brown water.

A few sea-birds were piping over the waste, and this was the only sound, except the grit of our own wheels and the steady step of the horse, which broke the silence.

"Not lively is it?" said Jones; and I couldn't say it was. As we drove "up street," as the inhabitants fondly called the small array of low houses which bordered the highroad, I noticed the lack-lustre expression of the few children and untidy women who were loitering about the doors of their houses.

There was an old tumble-down inn, with a dilapidated sign-board, scarcely held up by its rickety iron-work. A daub of yellow and red paint, with a dingy streak of blue, was supposed to represent the Duke's head, although what exalted member of the aristocracy was thus distinguished it would be hard to say. Jones inclined to think it was the Duke of Wellington; but I upheld the theory that it was the Duke of Marlborough, chiefly basing my arguments on the fact that no artist who desired to convey a striking likeness would fail to show the Great Duke in profile, whereas this personage was evidently depicted full face, and wearing a three-cornered hat.

At the end of the village was the church, standing in an untidy churchyard, and opposite it was a neat little house, quite new, and of that utilitarian order of architecture which will stamp the Victorian age as one of the least imaginative of eras. Two windows flanked the front door, and three narrow windows looked out overhead from under a slate roof; variety and distinction being given to the façade by the brilliant blending of the yellow bricks with red, so bright as to suggest the idea of their having been painted. A scrupulously clean stone at the front door, together with the bright

green of the little palings and woodwork, told me what sort of landlady to expect, and I was not disappointed. A kindly featured woman, thin, cheery, and active, received us, speaking in that encouraging tone of half compassionate, half-proprietary patronage, which I have observed so many women adopt towards lone beings of the opposite sex.

"You will find it precious dull, old man," said Jones, as we were eating our frugal dinner. "There's nothing for you to do, unless you care to try a shot at the duck over the mud-flats. I shall be busy on and off nearly all to-morrow."

As we talked, I could not help admiring the cheerful pluck with which Jones endured the terrible monotony of his life in this dreary place. His rector was said to be delicate, and in order to prolong a life, which no doubt he considered valuable to the Church, he lived with his family either at Torquay or Cannes in elegant idleness, quite unable to do any duty, but fully equal to enjoying the pleasant society of those charming places, and quite satisfied that he had done his duty when he sacrificed a tenth of his income to provide for the spiritual needs of his parish. There was no squire in the place; no "gentlefolk," as the rustics called them, lived nearer than five miles; and there was not a single being of his own class with whom poor Jones could associate. And yet he made no complaint. The nearest approach to one being the remark that the worst of it was, it was so difficult, if not impossible, to be really understood. "The poor being so suspicious and ignorant, they look at everything from such a low standpoint, enthusiasm and freshness sink so easily into formalism and listlessness."

The next day, finding that I really could be of no use, and feeling awkward and bored, as a man always is when another is actively doing his duty, I went off to the marshes to see if I could get any sport.

I took some sandwiches and a flask with me, not intending to return until dinner. After wandering about for some time, crossing dyke after dyke by treacherous rails more or less rotten, I found myself on the edge of a wide mere. I could see some duck out in the middle, and standing far out in the shallow water was a heron. They were all out of shot, and I saw I should do no good without a duck-punt.

I sat down on an old pile left on the top of the sea-wall, which had been lately repaired. The duck looked very tempting, but I doubted if I should do much good in broad daylight, even if I had a duck-punt, without a duck-gun. After sitting disconsolately for some time, I got up and wandered on.

The dreariness of the scene was most depressing: everything was brown and grey. Nothing broke the monotony of the wide-stretching mere; the whole scene gave me the impression of a straight line of interminable length, with a speck in the centre of it. That speck was myself.

At last, as I turned an angle in the sea-wall, I saw something lying above high-water mark, which looked like a boat.

Rejoiced to see any signs of humanity, I quickened my pace. It was a boat and, better still, a duck-punt. As I came nearer I could see that she was old and very likely leaky; but here was

a prospect of adventure, and I was not going to be readily daunted. On examination, the old craft seemed more water-tight than I expected. At least she held water very well, and if she kept it in, she must equally well keep it out. I turned her over to run the water out, and then dragging the crazy old boat over the line of sea-weed, launched her. But now a real difficulty met me. The paddles were nowhere to be seen. They had doubtless been taken away by the owner, and it would be little use searching for them. But a stout stick would do to punt her over the shallow water; and after some little search, I found an old stake which would answer well.

This was real luck. I had now some hope of bagging a few duck; at any rate, I was afloat, and could explore the little islets, which barely rose above the brown water. I might at least find some rabbits on them. I cautiously poled myself towards the black dots; but before I came within range, up rose first one, then another and another, like a string of beads, and the whole flight went, with outstretched necks and rapidly beating wings, away to my right, and seemed to pitch again beyond a low island some half-mile away. The heron had long ago taken himself off; so there was nothing to be done but pole across the mud in pursuit of the duck. I had not gone many yards when I found that I was going much faster than I expected, and soon saw the cause. The tide was falling, and I was being carried along with it. This would bring me nearer to my ducks, and I lazily guided the punt with the stake.

On rounding the island I found a new source of interest. The mere opened out to a much larger extent, and away towards my right I could see a break in the low land, as if a wide ditch had been cut through; while in this opening ever and anon dark objects rose up and disappeared again in a way I could not account for. The water seemed to be running off the mud-flats, and I saw that if I did not wish to be left high, but not dry, on the long slimy wastes, I must be careful to keep in the little channels or "lakes," which acted as natural drains to the acres of greasy mud.

A conspicuous object attracted my attention some mile or more towards the opening in the land. It was a vessel lying high up on the mud, and looking as if she was abandoned.

The ducks had pitched a hundred yards or so beyond the island, and I approached as cautiously as I could; but just as I was putting down the stake to take up my gun, there was a swift sound of beating wings and splashing water, and away my birds flew, low over the mud, towards the old hulk.

Here was a chance, I thought. If I could get on board and remain hidden, I might, by patiently waiting, get a shot. I looked at my watch; there was still plenty of daylight left, and the tide was only just beginning to leave the mud. I punted away, therefore, with renewed hope, and was not long in getting up to the old ship.

There was just sufficient water over the mud to allow me to approach within ten or twelve feet, but further I could not push the punt. This was disappointing; however, I noticed a deep lake ran round the other side, and determined to try my luck there. So with a slosh and a heave I got the flat afloat again, and made for the deeper water. It turned out

quite successful, and I was enabled to get right under the square overhanging counter, while a little lane of water led alongside her starboard quarter. I pushed the nose of the punt into this, and was not long in clambering on board by the rusty irons of her fore-chains.

The old vessel lay nearly upright in the soft mud, and a glance soon told she would never be used again. Her gear and rigging were all rotten, and everything valuable had been removed. She was a brig of some two hundred tons, and had been a fine vessel, no doubt. To me there is always a world of romance in a deserted ship. The places she has been to, the scenes she has witnessed, the possibilities of crime, of adventure—all these thoughts crowd upon me when I see an old hulk lying deserted and forgotten—left to rot upon the mud of some lonely creek.

In order to keep my punt afloat as long as possible, I towed her round and moored her under the stern, and then looked over the bulwarks for the duck. There they were, swimming not more than a hundred and fifty yards away, and they were coming towards me. I remained perfectly concealed under the high bulwark, and could see them paddling and feeding in the greasy weed. Their approach was slow, but I could afford to wait. Nearer and nearer they came; another minute, and they would be well within shot. I was already congratulating myself upon the success of my adventure, and thinking of the joy of Jones at this large accession to his larder, when suddenly there was a heavy splash, and with a wild spluttering rush the whole pack rose out of the water, and went skimming over the mud towards the distant sea. I let off both barrels after them, and tried to console myself by thinking that I saw the feathers fly from one; but not a bird dropped, and I was left alone in my chagrin.

What could have caused the splash, that luckless splash, I wondered. There was surely no one else on board the ship, and certainly no one could get out here without mud-pattens or a boat. I looked round. All was perfectly still. Nothing broke the monotony of the grey scene — sodden and damp and lifeless. A chill breeze came up from the south-west, bringing with it a raw mist, which was blotting out the dark distance, and fast limiting my horizon. The day was drawing in, and I must be thinking of going home. As I turned round, my attention was arrested by seeing a duck-punt glide past me in the now rapidly falling water, which was swirling by the mud-bank on which the vessel lay. But there was no one in her. A dreadful thought struck me. It must be my boat, and how shall I get home? I ran to the stern and looked over. The duck-punt was gone.

The frayed and stranded end of the painter told me how it had happened. I had not allowed for the fall of the tide, and the strain of the punt, as the water fell away, had snapped the line, old and rotten as it was.

I ran to the bows, and jumping on to the bitts, saw my punt peacefully drifting away, some quarter of a mile off. It was perfectly evident I could not hope to get her again.

It was beginning to rain steadily. I could see that I was in for dirty weather, and became a little anxious about how I was to get back, especially as it was now rapidly growing dark. So thick was it that I could

not see the low land anywhere, and could only judge of its position by remembering that the stern of the vessel pointed that way.

The conviction grew upon me that I could not possibly get away from this doleful old hulk without assistance, and how to get it, I could not for the life of me see. I had not seen a sign of a human being the whole day. It was not likely any more would be about at night. However, I shouted as loud as I could, and then waited to hear if there were any response. There was not a sound, only the wind moaned slightly through the stumps of the masts, and something creaked in the cabin.

Well, I thought, at least it might be worse. I shall have shelter for the night; while had I been left on one of these islands, I should have had to spend the night exposed to the pelting rain. Happy thought! Go below before it gets too dark, and see what sort of a berth can be got, if the worst comes to the worst. So thinking, I went to the booby-hatch, and found as I expected that it was half broken open, and any one could go below who liked.

As I stepped down the rotting companion, the air smelt foul and dank. I went below very cautiously, for I was not at all sure that the boards would bear me. It was fortunate I did so, for as I stepped off the lowest step the floor gave way under my foot, and had I not been holding on to the stair-rail, I should have fallen through. Before going any further, I took a look round.

The prospect was not inviting. The light was dim; I could scarcely make out objects near me, all else was obscurity. I could see that the whole of the inside of the vessel was completely gutted. What little light there was came through the stern ports. A small round speck of light looked at me out of the darkness ahead, and I could see that the flooring had either all given way or been taken out of her. At my feet a gleam of water showed me what to expect if I should slip through the floor-joists. Altogether, a more desolate, gloomy, ghostly place it would be difficult to find.

I could not see any bunk or locker where I could sit down, and everything movable had been taken out of the hulk. Groping my way with increasing caution, I stepped across the joists, and felt along the side of the cabin. I soon came to a bulkhead. Continuing to grope, I came to an opening. If the cabin was dim, here was blackness itself. I felt it would be useless to attempt to go further, especially as a very damp foul odour came up from the bilge-water in her hold. As I stood looking into the darkness, a cold chilly shudder passed over me, and with a shiver I turned round to look at the cabin. My eyes had now become used to the gloom. A deeper patch of darkness on my right suggested the possibility of a berth, and groping my way over to it, I found the lower bunk was still entire. Here at least I could rest, if I found it impossible to get to shore. Having some wax vestas in my pocket, I struck a light and examined the bunk. It was better than I expected. If I could only find something to burn, I should be comparatively cheerful.

Before reconciling myself to my uncomfortable position, I resolved to see whether I could not get to the shore, and went up the rickety stairs again. It was raining hard, and the wind had got up. Nothing could be more dismal. I

looked over the side and lowered myself down from the main-chains, to see if it were possible to walk over the mud. I found I could not reach the mud at all; and fearful of being unable to climb back if I let go, I clambered up the side again and got on board.

It was quite clear I must pass the night here. Before going below I once more shouted at the top of my voice, more to keep up my own spirits than with any hope of being heard, and then paused to listen. Not a sound of any sort replied. I now prepared to make myself as comfortable as I could.

It was a dreary prospect. I would rather have spent the night on deck than down below in that foul cabin; but the drenching driving rain, as well as the cold, drove me to seek shelter below. It seemed so absurd to be in the position of a shipwrecked sailor, within two or three miles of a prosy country hamlet, and in a landlocked harbour while actually on land, if the slimy deep mud could be called land. I had not many matches left, but I had my gun and cartridges. The idea occurred to me to fire off minute-guns. "That's what I ought to do, of course. The red flash will be seen in this dark night," for it was dark now and no mistake. Getting up on to the highest part of the vessel, I blazed away. The noise sounded to me deafening; surely the whole country-side would be aroused. After firing off a dozen cartridges, I waited. But the silence only seemed the more oppressive, and the blackness all the darker. "It's no good; I'll turn in," I thought, dejectedly.

With great difficulty I groped my way to the top of the companion-ladder, and bumped dismally down the steps. If only I had a light I should be fairly comfortable, I thought. "Happy thought, make a 'spit-devil!'" as we used when boys to call a little cone of damp gunpowder.

I got out my last two cartridges, and emptying the powder carefully into my hand, I moistened it, and worked it up to a paste. I then placed it on the smooth end of the rail, and lighted it. This was brilliant: at least so it seemed by contrast with the absolute blackness around me. By its light I was able to find my way to the bunk, and it lasted just long enough for me to arrange myself fairly comfortably for the night. By contriving a succession of matches, I was enabled to have enough light to see to eat my frugal supper; for I had kept a little sherry and a few sandwiches to meet emergencies, and it was a fortunate thing I had. The light and the food made me feel more cheery, and by the time the last match had gone out, I felt worse might have happened to me by a long way.

As I lay still, waiting for sleep to come, the absurdity of the situation forced itself upon me. Here was I, to all intents and purposes as much cut off from all communication with the rest of the world as if I were cast away upon a desert island. The chances were that I should make some one see or hear me the next day. Jones would be certain to have the country searched, and at the longest I should only endure the discomfort of one night, and get well laughed at for my pains; but meanwhile I was absolutely severed from all human contact, and was as isolated as Robinson Crusoe, only "more so," for I had no other living thing whatever to share my solitude. The silence of the place was perfect; and if silence can woo sleep.

sleep ought very soon to have come. But when one is hungry and wet, and in a strange uncanny kind of place, besides being in one's clothes, it is a very difficult thing to go to sleep. First, my head was too low; then, after resting it on my arms, I got cramp in them. My back seemed all over bumps; when I turned on my side, I appeared to have got a rather serious enlargement of the hip-joint; and I found my damp clothes smell very musty. After sighing and groaning for some time, I sat up for change of position, and nearly fractured my skull in so doing, against the remains of what had once been a berth above me. I didn't dare to move in the inky blackness, for I had seen sufficient to know that I might very easily break my leg or my neck in the floorless cabin.

There was nothing for it but to sit still, or lie down and wait for daylight. I had no means of telling the time. When I had last looked at my watch, before the last match had gone out, it was not more than six o'clock; it might be now about eight, or perhaps not so late. Fancy twelve long hours spent in that doleful black place, with nothing in the world to do to pass away the time! I *must* go to sleep; and so, full of this resolve, I lay down again.

I suppose I went to sleep. All I can recollect, after lying down, is keeping my mind resolutely turned inwards, as it were, and fixed upon the arduous business of counting an imaginary and interminable flock of sheep pass one by one through an ideal gate. This meritorious method of compelling sleep had, no doubt, been rewarded; but I have no means of knowing how long I slept, and I cannot tell at what hour of the night the following strange circumstances occurred — for occur they certainly did — and I am as perfectly convinced that I was the oral witness to some ghastly crime, as I am that I am writing these lines. I have little doubt I shall be laughed at, as Jones laughed at me — be told that I was dreaming, that I was overtired and nervous. In fact, so accustomed have I become to this sort of thing, that I now hardly ever tell my tale; or, if I do, I put it in the third person, and then I find people believe it, or at least take much more interest in it. I suppose the reason is, that people cannot bring themselves to think so strange a thing could have happened to such a prosy every-day sort of man as myself, and they cannot divest their minds of the idea that I am — well, to put it mildly — "drawing on my imagination for facts." Perhaps, if the tale appears in print, it will be believed, as a facetious friend of mine once said to a newly married couple, who had just seen the announcement of their marriage in the 'Times,' "Ah, didn't know you were married till you saw it in print!"

Well, be the time what it may have been, all I know is that the next thing I can remember after getting my five-hundredth sheep through the gate is, that I heard two most horrible yells ring through the darkness. I sat bolt-upright; and as a proof that my senses were "all there," I did not bring my head this time against the berth overhead, remembering to bend it outwards so as to clear it.

There was not another sound. The silence was as absolute as the darkness. "I must have been dreaming," I thought; but the sounds were ringing in my ears, and my heart was beating with excitement. There must have

been some reason for this. I never was "taken this way" before. I could not make it out, and felt very uncomfortable. I sat there listening for some time. No other sound breaking the deathly stillness, and becoming tired of sitting, I lay down again. Once more I set myself to get my interminable flocks through that gate, but I could not help myself listening.

There seemed to me a sound growing in the darkness, a something gathering in the particles of the air, as if molecules of the atmosphere were rustling together, and with stilly movement were whispering something. The wind had died down, and I would have gone on deck if I could move; but it was hazardous enough moving about in the light: it would have been madness to attempt to move in that blackness. And so I lay still and tried to sleep.

But now there was a sound, indistinct, but no mere fancy; a muffled sound, as of some movement in the forepart of the ship. I listened intently and gazed into the darkness.

What was the sound? It did not seem like rats. It was a dull, shuffling kind of noise, very indistinct, and conveying no clue whatever as to its cause. It lasted only for a short time. But now the cold damp air seemed to have become more piercingly chilly. The raw iciness seemed to strike into the very marrow of my bones, and my teeth chattered. At the same time a new sense seemed to be assailed: the foul odour which I had noticed arising from the stagnant water in the bilge appeared to rise into more objectionable prominence, as if it had been stirred.

"I cannot stand this," I muttered, shivering in horrible aversion at the disgusting odour; "I will go on deck at all hazards."

Rising to put this resolve in execution, I was arrested by the noise beginning again. I listened. This time I distinctly distinguished two separate sounds: one, like a heavy soft weight being dragged along with difficulty; the other like the hard sound of boots on boards. Could there be others on board after all? If so, why had they made no sound when I clambered on deck, or afterwards, when I shouted and fired my gun?

Clearly, if there were people, they wished to remain concealed, and my presence was inconvenient to them. But how absolutely still and quiet they had kept! It appeared incredible that there should be any one. I listened intently. The sound had ceased again, and once more the most absolute stillness reigned around. A gentle swishing, wobbling, lapping noise seemed to form itself in the darkness. It increased, until I recognised the chattering and bubbling of water. "It must be the tide which is rising," I thought; "it has reached the rudder, and is eddying round the stern-post." This also accounted, in my mind, for the other noises, because, as the tide surrounded the vessel, and she thus became water-borne, all kinds of sounds might be produced in the old hulk as she resumed her upright position.

However, I could not get rid of the chilly horrid feeling those two screams had produced, combined with the disgusting smell, which was getting more and more obtrusive. It was foul, horrible, revolting, like some carrion, putrid and noxious. I prepared to take my chances of damage, and

rose up to grope my way to the companion-ladder.

It was a more difficult job than I had any idea of. I had my gun, it was true, and with it I could feel for the joists; but when once I let go of the edge of the bunk I had nothing to steady me, and nearly went headlong at the first step. Fortunately I reached back in time to prevent my fall; but this attempt convinced me that I had better endure the strange horrors of the unknown, than the certain miseries of a broken leg or neck.

I sat down, therefore, on the bunk.

Now that my own movements had ceased, I became aware that the shuffling noise was going on all the time. "Well," thought I, "they may shuffle. They won't hurt me, and I shall go to sleep again." So reflecting, I lay down, holding my gun, ready to use as a club if necessary.

Now it is all very well to laugh at superstitious terrors. Nothing is easier than to obtain a cheap reputation for brilliancy, independence of thought, and courage, by deriding the fear of the supernatural when comfortably seated in a drawing-room well lighted, and with company. But put those scoffers in a like situation with mine, and I don't believe they would have been any more free from a feeling the reverse of bold, mocking, and comfortable, than I was.

I had read that most powerful ghost-story, 'The Haunted and the Haunters,' by the late Lord Lytton, and the vividness of that weird tale had always impressed me greatly. Was I actually now to experience in my own person, and with no possibility of escape, the trying ordeal that bold ghost-hunter went through, under much more favourable circumstances? He at least had his servant with him. He had fuel and a light, and above all, he could get away when he wanted to. I felt I could face any number of spiritual manifestations, if only I had warmth and light. But the icy coldness of the air was eating into my bones, and I shivered until my teeth chattered.

I could not get to sleep. I could not prevent myself listening, and at last I gave up the contest, and let myself listen. But there seemed now nothing to listen to. All the time I had been refusing to let my ears do their office, by putting my handkerchief over one ear, and lying on my arm with the other, a confused noise appeared to reach me, but the moment I turned round and lay on my back, everything seemed quiet. "It's only my fancy after all; the result of cold and want of a good dinner. I will go to sleep" But in spite of this I lay still, listening a little longer. There was the sound of trickling water against the broad bilge of the old hulk, and I knew the tide was rising fast: my thoughts turned to the lost canoe, and to reproaching myself with my stupidity in not allowing enough rope, or looking at it more carefully. Suddenly I became all attention again. An entirely different sound now arrested me. It was distinctly a low groan, and followed almost immediately by heavy blows—blows which fell on a soft substance, and then more groans, and again those sickening blows.

"There must be men here. Where are they? and what is it?" I sat up, and strained my eyes towards where the sound came from. The sounds had ceased again. Should I call out, and let the man

or men know that I was here? What puzzled me was the absolute darkness. How could any one see to hit an object, or do anything else in this dense obscurity? It appalled me. Anything might pass at an inch's distance, and I could not tell who or what it was. But how could anything human find its way about, any more than I could? Perhaps there was a solid bulkhead dividing the forecastle from me. But it would have to be very sound, and with no chink whatever, to prevent a gleam or ray of light finding its way out somewhere. I could not help feeling convinced that the whole hull was open from one end to the other. Was I really dreaming after all? To convince myself that I was wide awake, I felt in my pockets for my note-book, and pulling out my pencil, I opened the book, and holding it in my left hand, wrote as well as I could, by feel alone: "I am wide awake; it is about midnight—Christmas eve, 187–." I found I had got to the bottom of the page, so I shut the book up, resolving to look at it the next morning. I felt curious to see what the writing looked like by daylight.

But all further speculation was cut short by the shuffling and dragging noise beginning again. There was no doubt the sounds were louder, and were coming my way.

I never in all my life felt so uncomfortable—I may as well at once confess it — so frightened. There, in that empty hull, over that boardless floor, over these rotting joists, somebody or something was dragging some heavy weight. What, I could form no conjecture; only the shrieks, the blows, the groans, the dull thumping sounds, compelled me to suspect the worst,—to feel convinced that I was actually within some few feet of a horrible murder then being committed. I could form no idea of who the victim was, or who was the assassin. That I actually heard the sounds I had no doubt; that they were growing louder and more distinct I felt painfully aware. The horror of the situation was intense. If only I could strike a light, and see what was passing close there—but I had no matches. I could hear a sound as of some one breathing slowly, stertorously, then a dull groan. And once more the cruel sodden blows fell again, followed by a drip, drip, and heavy drop in the dank water below, from which the sickening smell rose, pungent, reeking, horrible.

The dragging shuffling noise now began again. It came quite close to me, so close that I felt I had only to put out my hand to touch the thing. Good heavens! was it coming to my bunk? The thing passed, and all the time the dull drip, as of some heavy drops, fell into the water below. It was awful. All this time I was sitting up, and holding my gun by its barrel, ready to use it if I were attacked. As the sound passed me at the closest, I put out the gun involuntarily; but it touched nothing, and I shuddered at the thought that *there was no floor over which the weight could be drawn.*

I must be dreaming some terribly vivid dream. It could not be real. I pinched myself. I felt I was pinching myself. It was no dream. The sweat poured off my brow, my teeth chattered with the cold. It was terrific in its dreadful mystery.

And now the sounds altered. The noises had reached the companion-ladder. Something was

climbing them with difficulty. The old stairs creaked. Bump, thump, the thing was dragged up the steps with many pauses, and at last it seemed to have reached the deck. A long pause now followed. The silence grew dense around. I dreaded the stillness—the silence that made itself be heard almost more than the sounds. What new horror would that awful quiet bring forth? What terror was still brooding in the depths of that clinging darkness—darkness that could be felt?

The absolute silence was broken,—horribly broken,—by a dull drip from the stairs, and then the dragging began again. Distant and less distinct, but the steps were louder. They came nearer—over my head—the old boards creaked, and the weight was dragged right over me. I could hear it above my head: for the steps stopped, and two distinct raps, followed by a third heavier one, sounded so clearly above me, that it seemed almost as if it was something striking the rotten woodwork of the berth over my head. The sounds were horribly suggestive of the elbows and head of a body being dropped on the deck.

And now, as if the horrors had not been enough, a fresh ghastliness was added. So close were the raps above me that I involuntarily moved, as if I had been struck by what caused them. As I did so, I felt something drop on to my head and slowly trickle over my forehead: it was too horrible! I sprang up in my disgust, and with a wild cry I stepped forward, and instantly fell between the joists into the rank water below.

The shock was acute. Had I been asleep and dreaming before, this must inevitably have roused me up. I found myself completely immersed in water, and, for a moment, was absolutely incapable of thinking. As it was pitch-dark and my head had gone under, I could not tell whether I was above water or not, as I felt the bottom and struggled and splashed on to my legs. It was only by degrees I knew I must be standing with my head out of the foul mixture, because I was able to breathe easily, although the wet running down from my hair dribbled into my mouth as I stood shivering and gasping.

It was astonishing how a physical discomfort overcame a mental terror. Nothing could be more miserable than my present position, and my efforts were at once directed to getting out of this dreadful place. But let any one who has ever had the ill-luck to fall out of bed in his boyhood try and recollect his sensations. The bewildering realisation that he is not in bed, that he does not know where he is, which way to go, or what to do to get back again; everything he touches seems strange, and one piece of furniture much the same as any other. I well remember such an accident, and how, having rolled under the bed before I was wide awake, I could not for the life of me understand why I could not get up, what it was that kept me down. I had not the least idea which way to get out, and kept going round and round in a circle under my bed for a long time, and should probably have been doing it until daylight, had not my sighs and groans awoke my brother, who slept in the same room, and who came to my help.

If, then, one is so utterly at fault in a room every inch of which one knows intimately, how much more hopeless was my posi-

tion at the bottom of this old vessel, half immersed in water, and totally without any clue which could help me to get out! I had not the least idea which was the ship's stern or which her stem, and every movement I made with my feet only served to unsteady me, as the bottom was all covered with slime, and uneven with the great timbers of the vessel.

My first thought on recovering my wits was to stretch my arms up over my head, and I was relieved to find that I could easily reach the joists above me. I was always fairly good at gymnastics, and I had not much difficulty in drawing myself up and sitting on the joist, although the weight of my wet clothes added to my exertions considerably. Having so far succeeded, I sat and drained, as it were, into the water below. The smell was abominable. I never disliked myself so much, and I shivered with cold.

As I could not get any wetter, I determined to go on deck somehow, but where was the companion-ladder? I had nothing to guide me. Strange to say, the reality of my struggles had almost made me forget the mysterious phenomena I had been listening to. But now, as I looked round, my attention was caught by a luminous patch which quivered and flickered on my right, at what distance from me I could not tell. It was like the light from a glow-worm, only larger and changing in shape; sometimes elongated like a lambent oval, and then it would sway one way or another, as if caught in a draught of air. While I was looking at it and wondering what could cause it, I heard the steps over my head; they passed above me, and then seemed to grow louder on my left. A creeping dread again came over me. If only I could get out of this horrible place—but where were the stairs? I listened. The footfall seemed to be coming down some steps; then the companion-ladder must be on my left. But if I moved that way I should meet the thing, whatever it was, that was coming down. I shuddered at the thought. However, I made up my mind. Stretching out my hand very carefully, I felt for the next joist, reached it, and crawled across. I stopped to listen. The steps were coming nearer. My hearing had now become acute; I could almost tell the exact place of each footfall. It came closer—closer,—quite close, surely—on the very joist on which I was sitting. I thought I could feel the joist quiver, and involuntarily moved my hand to prevent the heavy tread falling on it. The steps passed on, grew fainter, and ceased, as they drew near the pale lambent light. One thing I noticed with curious horror, and that was, that although the thing must have passed between me and the light, yet it was never for a moment obscured, which it must have been had any body or substance passed between, and yet I was certain that the steps went directly from me to it.

It was all horribly mysterious; and what had become of the other sound—the thing that was being dragged? An irresistible shudder passed over me; but I determined to pursue my way until I came to something. It would never do to sit still and shiver there.

After many narrow escapes of falling again, I reached a bulkhead, and cautiously feeling along it, I came to an opening. It was the companion-ladder. By this time my hands, by feeling over the

joists, had become dry again. I felt along the step to be quite sure that it was the stairs, and in so doing I touched something wet, sticky, clammy. Oh, horror! what was it? A cold shiver shook me nearly off the joist, and I felt an unutterable sense of repulsion to going on. However, the fresher air which came down the companion revived me, and, conquering my dread, I clambered on to the step. It did not take long to get up-stairs and stand on the deck again.

I think I never in all my life experienced such a sense of joy as I did on being out of that disgusting hole. It was true I was soaking wet, and the night wind cut through me like a knife; but these were things I could understand, and were matter of common experience. What I had gone through might only be a question of nerves, and had no tangible or visible terror; but it was none the less very dreadful, and I would not go through such an experience again for worlds. As I stood cowering under the lee of the bulwark, I looked round at the sky. There was a pale light as if of daybreak away in the east, and it seemed as if all my troubles would be over with the dawn. It was bitterly cold. The wind had got round to the north, and I could faintly make out the low shore astern.

While I stood shivering there, a cry came down the wind. At first I thought it was a sea-bird, but it sounded again. I felt sure it was a human voice. I sprang up on to the taffrail, and shouted at the top of my lungs, then paused. The cry came down clearer and distinct. It was Jones's voice—had he heard me? I waved my draggled pocket-handkerchief and shouted again. In the silence which followed, I caught the words, "We are coming." What joyful words! Never did shipwrecked mariner on a lonely isle feel greater delight. My misery would soon be over. Anyhow, I should not have to wait long.

Unfortunately the tide was low, and was still falling. Nothing but a boat could reach me, I thought, and to get a boat would take some time. I therefore stamped up and down the deck to get warm; but I had an instinctive aversion for the companion-ladder, and the deep shadows of the forepart of the vessel.

As I turned round in my walk, I thought I saw something moving over the mud. I stopped. It was undoubtedly a figure coming towards me. A voice hailed me in gruff accents—

"Lily, ahoy! Be any one aboard?"

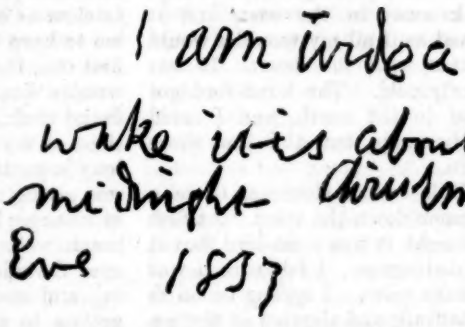
Was any one aboard? What an absurd question! and here had I been shouting myself hoarse. However, I quickly reassured him, and then understood why my rescuer did not sink in the soft mud. He had mud-pattens on. Coming up as close as he could, he shouted to me to keep clear, and then threw first one, then the other, clattering wooden board on to the deck. I found them, and under the instructions of my friend, I did not take long in putting them on. The man was giving me directions as to how to manage; but I did not care how much wetter I got, and dropped over the side into the slime. Sliding and straddling, I managed to get up to my friend, and then together we skated, as it were, to the shore—although skating very little represents the awkward splashes and slips I made on my way to land. I found quite a little crowd

awaiting me on the bank; but Jones, with ready consideration, hurried me off to a cart he had in a lane near, and drove me home.

I told him the chief points of the adventure on our way; but did not say anything of the curious noises. It is odd how shy a man feels at telling what he knows people will never believe. It was not until the evening of the next day that I began to tell him, and then only after I was fortified by an excellent dinner, and some very good claret. Jones listened attentively. He was far too kindly and well-bred to laugh at me; but I could see he did not believe one word as to the reality of the occurrence. "Very strange!" "How remarkable!" "Quite extraordinary!" he kept saying, with evident interest. But I was sure he put it all down to my fatigue and disordered imagination. And so, to do him justice, has everybody else to whom I have told the tale since.

The fact is, we cannot, in this prosaic age, believe in anything the least approaching the supernatural. Nor do I. But nevertheless I am as certain as I am that I am writing these words, that the thing did really happen, and will happen again, may happen every night for all I know, only I don't intend to try and put my belief to the test. I have a theory which of course will be laughed at, and as I am not in the least scientific, I cannot bolster it up by scientific arguments. It is this: As Mr Edison has now discovered that by certain simple processes human sounds can be reproduced at any future date, so accidentally, and owing to the combination of most curious coincidences, it might happen that the agonised cries of some suffering being, or the sounds made by one at a time when all other emotions are as nothing compared to the supreme sensations of one committing some awful crime, could be impressed on the atmosphere or surface of an enclosed building, which could be reproduced by a current of air passing into that building under the same atmospheric conditions. This is the vague explanation I have given to myself.

However, be the explanation what it may, the facts are as I have stated them. Let those laugh who did not experience them. To return to the end of the story. There were two things I pointed out to Jones as conclusive that I was not dreaming. One was my pocket-book. I showed it him, and the words were quite clear—only, of course, very straggling. This is a fac-simile of the writing, but I cannot account for the date being 1837—



The other point was the horrible stains on my hands and clothes. A foul-smelling dark chocolate stain was on my hair, hands, and clothes. Jones said, of course, this was from the rust off the mould-

ering iron-work, some of which no doubt had trickled down, owing to the heavy rain, through the defective caulking of the deck. The fact is, there is nothing that an ingenious mind cannot explain; but the question is, Is the explanation the right one?

I could easily account for the phosphorescent light. The water was foul and stagnant, and it was no doubt caused by the same gases which produce the well-known ignis-fatuus or Will-o'-the-wisp.

We visited the ship, and I recovered my gun. There were the same stains on the deck as there were on my clothes; and curiously enough they went in a nearly straight line over the place where I lay, from the top of the companion to the starboard bulwark. We carefully examined the forepart of the ship: it was as completely gutted as the rest of her. Jones was glad to get on deck again, as the atmosphere was very unpleasant, and I had no wish to stay.

At my request Jones made every inquiry he could about the old hulk. Not much was elicited. It bore an evil name, and no one would go on board who could help it. So far it looked as if it were credited with being haunted. The owner, who had been the captain of her, had died about three years before. He bore an ill reputation; but as he had left his money to the most influential farmer in the district, the country-people were unwilling to talk against him.

I went with Jones to call on the farmer, and asked him point-blank if he had ever heard whether a murder had been committed on board the Lily. He stared at me, and then laughed. "Not as I know of" was all his answer—and I never got any nearer than that.

I feel that this is all very unsatisfactory. I wish I could give some thrilling and sensational explanation. I am sorry I cannot. My imagination suggests many, as no doubt it will to each of my readers who possesses that faculty; but I have only written this to tell the actual facts, not to add to our superabundant fiction.

If ever I come across any details bearing upon the subject, I will not fail to communicate them at once.

The vessel I found was the Lily of Goole, owned by one Master Gad Earwaker, and built in 1801.

HERO AND LEANDER.

FROM THE GERMAN OF FRIEDRICH SCHILLER.

See yonder castles old and hoar,
Each fronting each from either shore,
  Bathed in the sunshine's gold,
Where, storming through the Dardanelles'
High rocky gates, the tide that swells
  The Hellespont is rolled.
Hark! how against the rocks they roar,
  The waves that seethe and eddy there;
Though Asia they from Europe tore,
  Yet love they could not scare.

Through Hero's and Leander's hearts
God Amor winged his fiery darts
  With love's sweet anguish tipped
Hero, as Hebe fair was she,
And o'er the mountains ranging, he
  His hunting mates outstripped.
But out, alas! their parents' feud
  Forbade this plighted pair to meet,
And only at life's peril could
  They win love's fruitage sweet.

On Sestos' rock-tower, round whose base
The billows rush in endless chase,
  And fling on high their foam,
The maiden sat, a-dread, alone,
Her gaze toward Abydos thrown,
  Which was her lover's home.
Alas! no bridge to yon far strand
  Is there the wanderer to convey;
No pinnace there puts out from land,
  Yet Love found out a way.

Out of the labyrinth love led
Great Theseus with unerring thread,
  Can fools with wit inspire,
Bends savage cattle to the yoke,
To cleave with diamond ploughshare broke
  The steers that snorted fire.
Not Styx's stream, ninefold and black,
  The dauntless Heracles appals,
That bore the bride triumphant back
  From Pluto's gloomy halls.

Leander thus, with heart on fire,
And goaded by love's sweet desire,
  The weltering waters braves;
When day's bright sheen begins to wane,
The daring swimmer leaps amain

Into the darkling waves.
With stalwart arms he daffs them by,
Intent to gain the strand so dear,
When from the turret flashing high
The beacon-torch shines clear.

Anon within his mistress' arms,
She with her close caresses warms
The limbs the waves have chilled.
For danger past meet guerdon this,
That steeps him, soul and sense, in bliss,
All through with rapture thrilled;
Lingering, till dawn steals on apace,
Awakes him from his blissful dream,
And scares him from his love's embrace
To Pontus' icy stream.

Thus thirty suns flew by, and still
Of stolen delights they snatched their fill,
Delights that never cloyed,—
Each night to them a bridal night—
The gods might envy such delight,
So fresh, so unalloyed.
A perfect rapture no one knows,
Who ne'er has plucked, while none might tell,
With stealthy hand the fruit that grows
On the dread river marge of hell.

So days and nights went swiftly by
Alternate o'er the arching sky;
The happy lovers, they
Mark not the leaves that thickly fall,
And from its ice-bound northern hall
Grim winter making way.
They saw with joy, these happy wights,
The days, how shorter still they grew,
And blindly thanked great Jove for nights
Of lengthened joys in view.

Now came the time, when night and day
O'er all the heavens hold equal sway,
And from her rocky keep
Fair Hero watched with wistful eye
The sun's steeds sweeping down the sky,
To plunge into the deep.
And mirror-smooth beneath her swayed
The ocean, lulled in calm serene,
While not a breeze across it played,
To mar its crystal sheen.

And dolphins there, a jocund throng,
The sparkling silvery waves along

Wheel round and round in sport;
And upward from the nether deeps
Rose the gay band, which Thetis keeps
To guard her ocean-court.
To them alone has been revealed
The tie which these two lovers knit,
But Hecate to silence sealed
The lips might blab of it.

'Twas joy that ocean fair to see,
And thus in flattering tones did she
Invoke its lord divine:
"Sweet god! Thou false and faithless? No!
As such I brand the wretch, that so
Thy godhead should malign!
Mankind are faithless through and through,
And fathers' hearts are hard as steel;
But thine is gentle, kind, and true,
And for love's pangs can feel.

"Within these dreary walls of stone
Must I, uncheered, unwooed, alone,
Have withered in despair;
Bridge there was none, nor galley's prow,
Still to my arms my lover thou
Didst on thy shoulders bear.
Thy nether deeps are grim and drear,
And fearful is thy angry wave,
But love's beseechings win thine ear,
And thou befriend'st the brave.

"For Eros' shafts touched even thy heart,
Great God of Ocean though thou art,
When Hellé, fair as morn,
Was, with her brother flying, by
The Ram, whose fleece was golden, high
Across thy waters borne.
Smit by her charms, up from the black
Abysses swiftly didst thou leap,
And swept her from the creature's back
Down to thy lowest deep.

"A goddess with a god, she now,
Immortal from that hour as thou,
In her sea-grots abides;
Shields lovers when their foes pursue,
Calms thy tempestuous moods, and to
His port the sailor guides.
O beauteous Hellé, goddess bright,
Blest in thine own love, bring, I pray,
My lover to my arms to-night
Safe by the wonted way!"

Now o'er the sea did darkness lour,
And Hero kindled on her tower
  The torch that, flashing bright,
Bade her belovèd pilgrim haste
Across the waters' weltering waste,
  Led by its trusty light.
Far off a moaning sound is heard,
  The stars are blotted from the sky,
The darkling waves are inly stirred,
  The tempest-shock draws nigh.

Night settles on the watery plain,
And from the thund'rous clouds the rain
  In drenching torrents pours,
Forked lightnings flash along the air,
And, bursting from their rocky lair,
  Blast thick on storm-blast roars.
Huge gulfs in the wide ocean-swell
  Are rent as with convulsive spasm,
And, yawning like the jaws of hell,
  Gape widely, chasm on chasm.

"Woe, woe is me!" she shrieked. "O thou
Great Jove, have mercy on me now!
  Mad were my words! Woe's me!
Oh, if the gods have heard my prayer,
And he, despite the tempest there,
  Has braved the treacherous sea!
Birds trained to ocean's angry mood
  Fly homewards swiftly as they may,
And ships, that many a storm have stood,
  Make for the sheltering bay.

"Oh, he that never quailed, once more
Has dared what oft he dared before;
  This morn he pledged his troth,
By love's great god, to-night he would
Return, and death, death only should
  Release him from his oath!
And now, ay, even now, is he
  At grips with this fell storm, I know
'Tis dragging him, that raging sea,
  Down to the depths below.

"False Pontus, thy repose erewhile
Was but a mask to veil thy guile!
  As mirror smooth wert thou;
Thy waves were cunning-calm, till they
To venture forth had lured their prey,
  Whom they are whelming now.
Midway in thy wild eddies caught,
  Return, go-o'er, both hopeless made,
Thy every horror dire is wrought
  On him thou hast betrayed!"

Louder and louder grew the blast,
The billows mountain-high upcast
  Break foaming on the rocks.
Even galleys ribbed with stoutest oak,
Driven shoreward where these billows broke,
  Had shattered with the shocks.
The torch that was to light his way
  Dies in the gale; and everywhere,
On sea, on shore, turn where he may,
  Are horror and despair.

She prays that Aphrodite will
Command the hurricane to still
  The angry waves till morn,
And vows rich sacrifice to burn,
To all the ruthless winds in turn
  A steer with golden horn.
All goddesses that ocean sway,
  All gods in the high heavens that be,
She supplicates, the storms to stay
  That vex the raging sea.

"O blest Leucothoe, arise
From thy green halls, and hear my cries!
  Thou saviour goddess, whom
Full oft the sirking marinere
Has seen on ocean's waste appear,
  To rescue him from doom.
Stretch forth to him thy sacred veil,
  That, woven and blest by mystic charms,
If he but clutch, safe through the gale
  Will bear him to my arms."

Now the wild winds to rest are hushed,
And the horizon, faintly flushed,
  Tells Eos' steeds are nigh;
Serene and glassy-smooth the deep
Seems in its ancient bed to sleep,
  And bright smile sea and sky.
Around the rocks the wavelets sway,
  In silence rippling each on each,
And float up, as they calmly play,
  A body on the beach.

'Tis he, who even in death forlorn
Has kept the oath that he had sworn.
  One glance, and all is known!
No wailing cry her anguish speaks,
No tears stream down her bloodless cheeks,
  Despair has made her stone.
With hopeless stare she seems to scan
  The bright sky, the blank ocean-flow,
And to her face so marble-wan
  There mounts a noble glow.

"Dread Powers, I see your workings here
With force implacable, austere,
You urge your rights divine.
Swift close to my life's course is this,
Yet I have drunk rich draughts of bliss,
A glorious lot was mine.
Living, within thy shrine have I
Thy consecrated priestess been;
A joyful sacrifice I die,
Venus, to thee, great Queen!"

Her white robe far behind her swept,
As from the turret's edge she leapt
Down, down into the wave;
Her hallowed corpse the god receives,
Where slow his watery kingdom heaves,
And is himself her grave.
Well pleased he eyes his prey, then turns
To bear it to his realm below;
And pours from his exhaustless urns
The streams that ever flow.

THEODORE MARTIN.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES.

TWENTY years may prove a considerable period in the history of a nation, as it is undoubtedly in the life of an individual. Not much more than twenty years ago it happened to the writer of this paper, walking on the sands at Biarritz, to see the late Emperor of the French engaged in close conversation with the Count von Bismarck, while the little Prince Imperial was playing in the grounds of the Villa Eugénie, a few of the casual children on the beach being admitted as his temporary companions. It was amusing to see the way in which fathers and mothers pushed forward their at first somewhat shy little ones, so as to have a share in the coveted honour. The imperial power then seemed firm enough. The popularity of the Empress was unbounded. We hoped that there was at last something stable in France. The meeting of these two remarkable men seemed to give further promise of security. We know now what was seething in those two brains. Yet who would then have imagined that within some five years one of the two men then walking in apparent amity on the beach at Biarritz would be an exile in England, and the other conqueror of France? or that a few years later would see that happy boy stretched on the soil of Southern Africa by the *assegai* of a nameless savage?

Being once more in these parts, after this more than twenty years' absence, it occurred to the writer of this paper to inquire personally into the progress of a *culte* which about that time received a stimulus even from Biarritz—even from the Emperor himself. Twenty years may form a considerable period in the growth of a *culte*, as it undoubtedly has in the case of Our Lady of Lourdes.

A few years before the time alluded to, the Blessed Virgin, it is said, appeared several times to a young peasant-girl named Bernadette Soubirous in the Grotte de Massabielle at Lourdes.

Lourdes at that epoch was no thing more than a good-sized village on the way from Biarritz to the mountains, with nothing in particular to distinguish it from other picturesque villages in this valley of the Pyrenees. It is now a considerable town, the seat of an important industry, a magnet attracting coin from all quarters. It is the headquarters of a religion: an ecclesiastical centre to which pilgrims come from all parts, and from which the *culte* is conveyed to all parts of France and of the world,—like some large lake in a valley between the mountains, which collects the melting snows from distant hills, and sends forth into the regions beyond its superfluous streams.

Let no one, unless endowed with a considerable supply of strength, venture into this region in the *Mois de Marie*. Not only are the ordinary trains filled to overflowing, but trains full of pilgrims from all parts constantly block the way. The stranger inquires the reason of the frequent stoppage. "C'est un pèlerinage" is the invariable answer. But, indeed, there is no occasion to inquire. The excursionists announce themselves. Babies in arms, schools, *sœurs de charité*, priests, people old and young—where do they come from? Where do they not come from?

The mischief is, that there are pilgrimages in opposite directions. There is a rival attraction at Oloron; so that the traffic both up and down at this season, to say nothing of the incursion of another species of pilgrims who flock to the mountains to take the waters with which this region abounds, must sorely try the patience, and tax the politeness, and strain the resources, of the railway officials in these parts. Accidents, however, are rare. For one thing, they are in no hurry in this part of the world. It is as in some parts of Ireland, where the trains, it has been said, come in half an hour late, and behave as if they were half an hour early.

The crowd at the station was augmented by a *pensionnat de jeunes gens*—a large boys' boarding-school, conducted by several priests. They seemed well-mannered lads enough, some of them rather big lads, each with his bit of blue ribbon and metal cross attached; and they appeared to be on excellent terms with their reverend tutors. It is reassuring to see that there are not wanting in this country some who still feel the importance of religious training. One only wishes it was possible to find the religion without the fancies which have been inseparably mixed up with it. The spirit of unbelief is not to be exorcised by the spirit of superstition.

At the station one finds an unusually large number of omnibuses, more than one of which announces itself as "le plus près de la grotte." One which bears the inscription "Le seul en face de la grotte," is flatly contradicted by another which stands by its side. You find yourself at once in an atmosphere favourable to the growth of pious fraud or vivid imagination.

The "route de la Gave à la grotte" is flanked on either side by hotels, houses, villas, shops full of "objets de piété" and the usual trumpery wares. Convents, schools, orphanages, &c., are rising on the other side of the river, which is crossed by a fine bridge. As the stranger pursues his way, he is followed by various members of the "concours unanime pour l'exploitation d'étrangers," as a witty Frenchman was heard to describe the people in these parts. Old women lie in wait for you all along the road, armed with *cierges*, which they take for granted you cannot do without. Guides dart out upon you like the donkey-boys at Alexandria. A *diorama* and a *panorama* of the apparition invite your attention. Escaping all these snares, you arrive at last at the lofty church which overlooks the grotto, built by order of the Virgin as conveyed by Bernadette. There are the usual gaudy decorations; artificial flowers in great profusion; plenty of windows, but not a single bit of really good glass. The walls are so covered with *ex votos* of every kind, that there seems scarcely any space left. There are a considerable number of side chapels crowded with advertisements of cures, much after the manner of the proprietors of patent medicines. Here is a specimen: "Caroline Esserteaux atteinte d'une affection chronique de la moelle epinière, et frappée d'une paralysie des membres inférieures, devenue ascendante aux incurables de l'hospice de Niort depuis le 11 Février 1870, et guérie subitement à Lourdes le 2 Juillet 1873."

Descending to the grotto, below and on one side of the church, one is struck with its picturesque position. In a side of a rock, on the bank of a broad river, shaded by

stately trees, one sees the statue of the Virgin as described by Bernadette, with the inscription over it, "Je suis l'Immaculée Conception." Many lights are burning before the altar below. Every pilgrim holds a candle in his hand. Some are kneeling in the posture of adoration, some having a quiet picnic a little way apart. The face of the rock is covered with any amount of crutches. On one side is the spring which first began to flow beneath the hands of Bernadette, whose healing waters are now conveyed to all parts of the world. Attached to it is the shop where are sold bottles and gourds for those who carry away the miraculous water. One meets many with the regulation *flacon*, marked much as the mineral waters from other sources. It seems, indeed, as efficacious at a distance as at the source itself. M. Lassere (of whom more by-and-by) asserts a cure wrought by it in his own case, when he was persuaded to try it by a Protestant friend in Paris; so that one is at a loss to know why any sufferers should ever come so far, why people should be pulled out of apparently dying beds and conveyed many miles, when (if what M. Lassere asserts is true) they might be as completely cured by an application of the miraculous water at their own homes.

During the first six months 150,000 persons are said to have visited the grotto. And still, in the season, special trains, almost every day, from all parts of France, pour in their streams of pilgrims. Torchlight processions often take place. One seems to be back in the middle ages. "O sancta simplicitas!" as John Huss was heard to say, with quiet humour as well as Christian charity, when he saw an old man bearing a stick to add to his funeral pile.

M. Henri Lassere certainly seems to have "struck oil" when the happy thought occurred to him to put together all the traditions he could collect from all quarters upon the subject. His 'Notre Dame de Lourdes,' first published in 1869, has reached the 116th edition, though the book is bulky and not particularly cheap. M. Lassere has also published 'Episodes miraculeux de Lourdes,' equally bulky and equally dear, which has reached its 23d edition. Other historical works ("œuvres historiques"), so he calls them, such as a 'Life of Bernadette,' and 'Mois de Marie de Lourdes,' have proceeded from the same prolific pen.

M. Lassere is evidently one of those persons who have a morbid appetite for the marvellous. He absorbs everything in the shape of miracle, as a sponge absorbs water. He seems to say, in Tertullian's words, though not in Tertullian's sense, "Credo quia impossibile." His book is introduced by a Brief from Pius IX., to whom the apparition at Lourdes must have been a most opportune event. On the 25th of March 1858, the Feast of the Annunciation, the Blessed Virgin—so the tablet at the grotto relates—announced to Bernadette Soubirous, "Je suis l'Immaculée Conception." It was but three years before that Pius IX., against the judgment of the most learned theologians of France, had pronounced that a dogma which had till then been denied by many of the greatest doctors of the Roman Catholic Church, and held only as a pious opinion by others, must be received by all as necessary to salvation. We need not wonder at

the Pope's warm welcome of such an ally coming at such a convenient season.

The writer of this paper remembers seeing the Pope's steam-yacht in the harbour at Civita Vecchia not long after. It was painted white, which made the stains more visible, and the name inscribed on it in letters of gold was "Immacolata Concezione."

Upon the dogma itself M. Lassere dilates at length. His book, though interesting and picturesque in parts, is terribly spun out. He constantly interrupts the thread of his narrative by inserting out of all order cases of cure—like the pestilent habit of the modern advertiser, thrusting between the pages of an interesting novel a fly-leaf of some new nostrum. The arrangement must therefore be pronounced bad. This is the chief literary and artistic defect of an otherwise well-written book. It may be enough to quote a sentence or two of M. Lassere's upon the dogma. "Marie est plus que concue sans péché: elle est l'Immaculée Conception elle même. . . . C'est comme si elle eût dit, non pas, 'Je suis Vierge,' mais, 'Je suis la Virginité incarnée et vivante;' non pas, 'Je suis blanche,' mais, 'Je suis la Blancheur.'"—P. 191.

M. Lassere asks how it comes to pass that such crowds of pilgrims come to pray before a desert cave unknown ten years ago? how it has come to pass that the word of a child should have made so many regard it as a shrine of divinity? how they should come at her bidding to build over it the vast church which is to cost almost two millions of (French) money? how the testimony of an ignorant shepherd-girl upon apparitions which no one else around her saw, could produce such prodigious results?

It might not be easy to answer M. Lassère's questions if we were not allowed to take into account the temperament and character of the people; if we did not know how long the wood had been drying for such a fire; if we had had no instances of similar hallucinations; if we were not assured that there is no limit to the imagination and to the credulity of mankind.

M. Lassere himself says (p. 8): "Le pays a une dévotion particulière à la Vierge. Les sanctuaires qui lui sont consacrés sont nombreux dans les Pyrénées. . . . Tous les autels de l'église de Lourdes sont dédiés à la Mère de Dieu."

The mother of Bernadette, he tells us, was ill at the time of her birth, and unable to nourish her infant, who was put out to nurse in a neighbouring village. There she appears to have remained till she was fourteen years of age, though by that time she seemed to be scarcely more than eleven or twelve. She was employed by her foster parents to look after the sheep upon the desert mountains. She was subject, it appears, to asthma; could neither read nor write; and instead of French, spoke only the uncouth *patois* of the Pyrenees.

She was evidently morbid and imaginative when she returned home from those mountain solitudes, which are not always the best school for such temperaments. The photographs of her at this age are rather pleasing—far more so than those taken later on, when she had become a *sœur de charité* in the Convent of St Gildart at Nevers, where she died about twenty years after, at the age of thirty-five. There is a rather painful photograph of Sœur Marie

Bernard, as she was then called, on her bed of death, with another sister in an attitude on the floor.

M. Lassere describes, exactly in the style of a religious romance, how the child went one day to the grotto with a younger sister and another little companion, where about mid-day she heard a sound like a hurricane, and saw in a niche of the rock a female form of incomparable splendour. She tried to utter a cry, but her voice stuck in her throat. She shivered in all her limbs, and finally sank upon her knees. She really seems to have had a cataleptic seizure, or a nervous attack of some kind. Returned to herself ("complétement revenue à elle"—p. 30), she rejoined her companions, who were meanwhile a little way off, and who, noticing her agitation, plied her with questions, till she described to them the "vision." The next Sunday, Bernadette and her companions, who were now fired with curiosity, return to the grotto. Arrived, they immediately fall on their knees and recite the *Rosary*. Bernadette has another "vision"; her companions, however, seeing no sight and hearing no sound. After vespers the strange story is discussed by the crowd to whom it had been communicated—"vires acquirit eundo." During the week a good many people came to the cottage to interrogate the child.

It was now the beginning of Lent. The "cérémonies funèbres" of Ash-Wednesday wrought upon the minds of two other persons of higher degree—one of them a young girl already enrolled in the "congregation des enfants de Marie," the other a married lady. They propose to accompany Bernadette next morning, at the dawn of day, having first heard Mass in the church, on another visit to the grotto. Bernadette again sees the Virgin, "invisible pour tout autre qu'elle" (p. 41). Her companions, in a passage which reminds one of the table-turning mania of the time, promptly produce writing materials, and direct Bernadette to request the invisible stranger to write down her wishes. This request cannot, it appears, be complied with; but in answer to another, it is intimated that at the next interview others will be permitted to be present. The Virgin adds, "Je désire y voir du monde," and in polite terms requests Bernadette to do her the favour of returning every day for a fortnight (pp. 43, 44).

The two devotees lose no time in relating what, after all, they had neither seen nor heard. The report spread like wild-fire. It happened to be market-day, and the story is carried into all the country-side. Every morning hundreds, on Sunday thousands, escort or attend Bernadette at her now daily visit to the grotto. Every day it is the same story. Every day she is in a state of ecstasy, seeing what no one else can see, and hearing what none else can hear.

One day, however, "à l'heure habituelle des apparitions" (p. 32), the crowd who waited for *La Voyante* on the banks of the Gave were disappointed. Her parents had been persuaded to send the poor child to school. The *sœurs de charité* had come to the conclusion "que toutes ces visions n'avaient rien de réel, qu'elle avait le cerveau derangé, ou qu'elle mentait" (p. 83). Bernadette was forbidden by parents and teachers to return to the grotto. Bernadette, however, led by a divine impulse—we have M. Lassere's assurance for it—disobeys,—conduct which M. Lassere, with curious casuistry, defends.

It must be noted that the local authorities had already intervened

to stop what threatened to be a growing nuisance, with no more success than has been achieved in stopping the processions of the "Salvation Army" in our own country. "Le mouvement populaire suivait son libre cours, et grossissait comme les fleuves de ces contrées à la fonte des neiges" (p. 141).

The Virgin now directed Bernadette to go to the priests and tell them she desired a chapel to be built upon the spot. The *Curé*, however, seems to have been a man of sense. He bade the child first ask for a sign. "L'Apparition, me racontes-tu, a sous ses pieds un rosier sauvage. . . . Dislui de ma part que, si elle veut la chapelle, elle fasse fleurir le rosier" (p. 104). In the language of the officials, "L'Apparition est sommée de montrer son passeport" (p. 105).

Some expressed their persuasion that the wild rose would flourish. M. Lassere notes, in rather an injured tone, that it did not—whereby the faith of some seemed rather shaken. He supplies us, however, with the probable reasons which moved the Virgin to withhold the sign.

M. Lassere, who is generally as correct in his frequent textual citations of Scripture as he is hopelessly wrong in their application, makes here a mistake. He attributes (p. 105) to the centurion the pathetic prayer of the father of the demoniac child,—"Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief."

Bernadette, however, to return to the story, soon gives them herself a sign. She scratches the ground, and a small stream of water begins to flow,[1] which eventually becomes one of the industries of Lourdes.

The crowds now seem to swell with the stream. People marched all night that they might see "La Sainte," as she now begins to be called, in the morning. Between five and six thousand persons were encamped on the banks of the Gave. When the sun set, they still remained on the spot—"une foule d'âmes croyantes"—lighted candles and torches corresponding on earth to the stars which twinkled in the heavens. By the last day of the fortnight 20,000 persons were assembled before the grotto.

The clergy, to do them justice, at first gave no encouragement to these extravagances, though they have since made up for their remissness. Bernadette, however, is wonderfully persistent. In spite of her want of success in the matter of the sign, she again approaches the *Curé* of Lourdes. "Elle veut qu'on construise une chapelle, et qu'on fasse des processions à la grotte" (p. 143).

The poor *Curé* at last betakes himself to the Bishop. The Bishop meanwhile had been approached by the *Préfet*, and the *Préfet* had been set in motion by the Secretary of State, as we should call him—"Le Ministre de l'Instruction publique et des Cultes." His words are worth recording: "Il importe, à mon avis, de mettre un terme à des actes qui finiraient par compromettre les véritables intérêts du Catholicisme, et affaiblir le sentiment religieux dans les populations" (p. 194).

The *Préfet*, as M. Lassere admits, was a sincere Christian and good Catholic. Though somewhat pedantically expressed, and savour-

[1] M. Lassere is very hard on the doubters who remembered that "un pâtre a par hasard trouvé les eaux de Suchon" (p. 247).

ing of the French official style and spirit, nothing can well exceed the good sense of his remonstrances.

Unhappily the *Préfet* and the Bishop had just had a little difference in another matter which we need not enter into. The Bishop appears in this instance to have been in the right, though we do not know with what amount of conciliation the dispute was conducted. It ended, however, in a complete rupture, which probably made the settlement of the graver question still more difficult. So that when the *Préfet*, in the interests of order and of religion, "compromis par ces hallucinations ou ces supercheries," appealed to the Bishop to discountenance the "scenes scandaleuses" at Lourdes, the Bishop contented himself with appointing a commission of inquiry, composed wholly of ecclesiastics, to investigate a matter already sufficiently understood, and about which every sane and dispassionate person must long since have made up his mind. This, of course, gave an immense impetus to the whole enterprise. The miracles increased. The flame of Bernadette's *cierge* played over her hand harmlessly (p. 198). Several persons were suddenly cured by the application of the water, on the analysis of which chemists differed, though the ultimate conclusion was, that it was an ordinary spring. An infant, paralysed, and apparently on the point of death, was kept by its distracted mother for a quarter of an hour in the stream, and restored to sudden and complete health (pp. 167-175).

There were judgments also. A woman who had let a carriage to the local superintendent of police, who had tried to put a stop to the superstition, fell from a hay-loft and broke a rib. A man who had lent him a hatchet had his feet crushed by the fall of a piece of wood (pp. 233, 234).

Notable personages now came to pray before the grotto; among them M. Louis Veuillot, the redoubtable editor of the ultramontane 'Univers,' and Mrs Admiral Bruat ("Madame l'Amirale Bruat"), Gouvernante of the Prince Impérial, who had been attracted like other *dévotes* from Biarritz.

At this nick of time the Archbishop of Auch and another eminent personage applied to the Emperor, who then happened to be at Biarritz; whereupon that modern Gallio telegraphed to the authorities to let the people at Lourdes do as they liked. It reads like an actual reversal of the famous order, "Par le roi, défense de faire miracle en ce lieu."

M. Lassere, who admits that he writes ten years after the events he professes to relate, and whose style throughout (notwithstanding his disclaimer) is the style of the novelist rather than of the historian, is very severe on the character of the reports transmitted by the authorities. He says, in a tone of virtuous indignation, "On a vu quels romans impossibles l'honnête Ministre Rouland avait gravement acceptés comme des vérités incontestables" (p. 350) It is allowable to reply—

——"mutato nomine, de te Fabula narratur."

We are by this time quite prepared for the *Mandement* of the Bishop of Tarbes, pronouncing for the reality of the apparition, authorising the "culte de N. D. de Lourdes," and proposing to begin building the church which Bernadette had demanded, on the site which the astute prelate had already taken care to buy.

The part played by the Roman

Catholic clergy in all this discreditable transaction seems natural enough. We see them, at least the more intelligent and honest among them, at first reluctant to commit their Church in an age like this to a new miracle. The writer of this paper has just had an interesting conversation with a devout and accomplished Roman Catholic layman who volunteered a statement on the subject. He deplored the whole mischievous business of Lourdes, but declared it was the ignorant and fanatical people who pushed the priests on. In a religious as well as in a political sense, the saying seems to hold true—

"Parties are like to fish, 'tis said;
The tail directs them, not the head."

There is yet, perhaps, another factor in the case which must not be lost sight of. It is as Demetrius reminded his fellow-craftsmen at an earlier shrine, "Sirs, ye perceive that by this our craft we have our wealth." We have but to substitute one name (sacred as it is, yet human after all) for another in that narrative, and the correspondence is complete. When one finds an image (one must use the word)—an image of Our Lady of Lourdes in every house, in every room of the house, made after the precise pattern described by the *clairvoyante*, even down to minute details of its dress,[1]—not the really adorable representation of the mother with the Son, but of the mother designedly without the Son,—there is but one word for it; it is said without bitterness — Mariolatry. Throughout this region Mary reigns supreme. The human mother has taken the place of the divine Son.

That any one with the New Testament in his hands can accept a *culte* so out of all harmony with it, is one of those problems in psychology which seem incapable of solution.[2] That priests who regard with horror the progress of impiety should imagine this *culte* the best means of counteracting it, is perhaps still more surprising. It reminds one of the Celestials in the Flowery Land who at first thought to drive back the army of the barbarians with horrid cries and pictures of imaginary dragons. Vain visions are not the way to overcome unbelief. Modern miracles, impiously and fatuously placed on a footing with the historical ones,[3] do but add fuel to the flame. To call these silly superstitions "croyances Chrétiennes" (p. 140) is an abuse of language. Pious frauds no longer impose even on the faithful. In every pilgrimage conducted to Lourdes superstition knocks another nail in its own coffin. And if this were

[1] The morbid and imaginative child, in her dream or swoon, probably improved upon one of the images she had often seen in churches. M. Lassere's description (pp. 26-28), notwithstanding his disclaimer, suggests as much,—just as precocious children under Puritan surroundings sometimes produce religious tracts out of their recollection of other tracts.

[2] To that mother in Israel who envied the blessedness of her that bare Him, we remember the response of the divine Son, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it."

[3] See p. 142, where M. Lassere compares the conduct of the doubters at Lourdes to that of the Jews who resisted the miracles of Jesus Christ and His apostles. At p. 120 he speaks of the hand of the Virgin,—"cette main délicate et puissante à laquelle la nature est soumise." We do not exaggerate when we say that M. Lassere has made her a goddess.

all, it would not be to be regretted. But what renders it so mischievous is, that it is a blow at religious faith itself. The party of unbelief will see no difference between Christianity and the various counterfeits of it. These unintelligent enthusiasts are but playing into their hands. Men of the calibre of M. Lassere are perpetually protesting against the prevailing unbelief. They have only themselves to thank for it. They have compelled their countrymen to swallow so much, that now they will believe nothing.

Yet let us not be too hard on others. Let us look nearer home. When we see Roman Catholic Bishops and Archbishops in Ireland, and trusted and admired statesmen in England and Scotland (repudiating all former pledges), aiding and abetting those with whom killing is no murder, and who, whether disciples of St Simon or not, are practically agreed that *la propriété c'est le vol*,—we shall feel the less surprise at finding those of whom we hoped better things giving *affirmation authentique* to the grotesque superstition of Lourdes.

So the dream of an hysterical girl has made a simple village in the Pyrenees a name to conjure by; has brought innumerable crowds of profitable pilgrims to an unimportant place; has apparently strengthened, for a time, the ultramontane position. But we have only to go back to those sands of Biarritz to be reminded that "things are not what they seem." One ventures also to recall a divine allegory of a man who built his house upon the sand.

G. J. Cowley-Brown.

A STIFF-NECKED GENERATION.—CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—LADY JULIA'S LITTLE PLAN.

"I delight in the tender passions, and would befriend all under their influence."—*The Duenna.*

A MELANCHOLY and dreary time now set in for all connected with those in whom we are interested, with one exception, and that exception was Miss Catherine Liscard.

Catherine, as we know, was a young person with a natural aptitude for turning events, whether of joy or sorrow to those around her, to her own advantage; and she had early seen the strong points of the present situation.

In Lady Caroline's day, and in Rosamund's day, Catherine had been nowhere—a demure puss, creeping about in the background; occasionally emitting sparks, it is true, which might have enlightened more watchful eyes, but which had been passed over by those two dominant spirits, each too much taken up with her own whims and projects to give a moment to the supposition that a younger and feebler member of the family, could also have a mind of her own.

Catherine had bided her time.

On the death of her mother she had made some faint, wavering, and uncertain attempts at coming forward, making herself useful, and sliding into a more prominent position; but Rosamund had been in no mood to allow of indulgences and encroachments at that time. Everything which had savoured of a reflection on the old customs, and an overturning of the set routine, had been promptly quelled, and Catherine had at first made no way.

Then she had tried making friends with Gilbert, and been more successful. She had more than once taken him off her sister's hands, enabled Rosamund to slip away to solitude when only she could have done so, and established a claim on the latter's gratitude which had borne fruit. When she had been permitted to dine late on the night of Emily's and Henrietta's arrival, the ice had been really broken.

All the rest had been easy. She had made a slip in looking ungenial on the first symptoms of a more jocose dinner-table than was usual—and that on the first occasion of her presiding ever it—but the error had been quickly retrieved; and although another momentary check had been received on the abrupt cessation of the frolicsome succeeding week, she had again found her opportunity in the reaction which had followed.

Dear papa could not dine alone—could not drive about alone—could not have a long, dull evening alone. She had so much enjoyed dear papa's music; and had practised an accompaniment on purpose to please him, so surely now he would not refuse to hear it? What could dear papa do but agree, and listen to her carefully prepared chit-chat, and, in spite of himself, be drawn into ordering the phaeton round, and bringing out the flute?

Certes, Catherine was better than nobody. And though one's own schoolgirl daughter is no great thing, and a poor exchange for a lively, bantering, roguish young

lady visitor, still, when the one is not to be had, it is as well to put up with the other—and by degrees Mr Liscard found it so.

For one thing, Catherine, conscious of the feeble tenure by which she held her present high estate, took infinitely greater pains to amuse and gratify her parent than any other member of the house ever had thought of taking with Lady Caroline's husband—for in that light he had always been regarded.

Catherine was not only invariably good-humoured and attentive and at his service, but she had little ingratiating offices at command, and little affectionate flatteries on the tip of her tongue, whenever opportunity offered. Through her he learned that Mrs Twopenny, the baker's wife, thought him the youngest-looking gentleman of his years she had ever known; and that Mrs Jenkins at the home farm, had heard he had such a power of learning, that she was afraid so much as to let fall a word before him.

He had her own assurance of his talents as a whip, coupled with the compliments on the same subject left behind by Emily Gilbert. He heard that he never looked so well as on the box-seat of his phaeton, and that he managed the spirited pair so beautifully that no one need ever be nervous when driven by him.

Naturally the spirited pair came to the door the next day, and Catherine was driven wherever she wanted to go.

Again, with a diligence which neither love of the art nor fear of Miss Penrose had ever been able to incite, the dutiful daughter now mastered such simple ditties as a flute very much out of practice could accomplish; and as Mr Liscard was really fond of music for its own sake, and had only been discouraged from cultivating it, by Lady Caroline's persistent inattention and ignorance, there was no doubt that a resource against *ennui* had now been hit upon.

To Catherine it was, for the present, joy enough merely to play the grown-up person; to sit in the vast saloon and have coffee handed to her along with her father; and to stay up at night until she chose to go to bed.

For this she would have paid a much heavier price than merely drumming on the piano for an hour or so daily; and when, with an easy air, she one day found herself asking for the loan of her father's purse as they drove through the streets of Longminster, and subsequently shopping with it, here and there, all over the place, without his remonstrating, or even seeming to observe what she was about—(so taken up was he with himself, his horses, and his horsemanship)—her cup was full, and ran over.

What was it to her that her sister, the beauty, the pride of the neighbourhood, lay slowly recovering from the brink of death, feeble, wasted, helpless, unable for the slightest exertion of mind or body, the bloom on her cheeks faded, the round, healthy limbs shrunk and almost powerless, the once vigorous spirit like that of a little child?

Catherine would answer all inquiries in her most cheerful accent

"Rosamund is ever so much better, thank you. Yes, isn't it a pity she has had to have her hair cut off? But I daresay it will soon grow again." Or, "Aunt Julia says Rosamund is doing as well as we could possibly expect. We have just been to the Abbey. Some of us go over nearly every day." Or, "Rosamund always liked being with Aunt Julia. I daresay she

would rather be ill at the Abbey than anywhere else."

If interrogated as to the probable duration of the sick girl's recovery, Catherine would occasionally astonish her interrogator. "When will Rosamund be fit to come home? *Oh dear*, not for a long, *long* time yet. We have not even seen her yet. Oh, we have not thought about her coming home at all. Aunt Julia says she does not know in the least when she will be fit to be moved even downstairs,—and as for leaving the Abbey, Aunt Julia will keep her as long as ever she possibly can." And it was tolerably obvious that if Aunt Julia were to keep the sick girl altogether, one person at least would find no fault with the arrangement.

"The way that ridiculous Catherine is getting the upper hand in that poor, neglected house, really annoys me more than I can tell!" exclaimed Mrs Waterfield one day, on returning from King's Common, where Catherine had done the honours with an alacrity and solicitude more than creditable as a performance, but which did not answer so well with every one as with her docile papa. "I confess that to see that mere child sitting perked up in the drawing-room in an afternoon, ordering about, and taking the management of everything—she who ought to be at her grammar and geography, and would never have been visible at all, had her poor mother or Rosamund been about—it is quite too much for me. The child is insufferable. I cannot think where she picked up all that manner. Rosamund had not an atom of it—not at any time,—she was as charming and simple as possible, even when she had begun to be noticed, and made much of; and, for a wonder, Lady Caroline had the wisdom not to try to improve her. But Catherine is a born actress and diplomatist. Her coolness, her self-possession, the way in which she persecutes you with attentions and inquiries—and all the time with such evident satisfaction in her own perfect address and *savoir faire*—I scarcely know how to look. She is a detestable child," quoth the speaker, with energy.

Rosamund, Mrs Waterfield had been unable to resist, in spite, perhaps, of an involuntary touch of envy, and wonder that the unamiable, uninviting Lady Caroline Liscard should have such a bright and radiant creature belonging to her—but she could let herself out, as it were, about Catherine.

Catherine reigning at King's Common, in all the glory of solitude and prominence, and with obvious forecasting of gay doings and revelry by-and-by, was likely to have advantages and surroundings such as she could not hope to give her girls; and what was Catherine that she should merit such promotion? If her father went on as he had begun, indeed, the young regent's reign might be short, though merry—but Mrs Waterfield did not under-rate the abilities of the astute damsel; she did not think that "dear papa" would find himself left altogether free to pick and choose his society. Already Catherine had made great strides in her ascendancy; and as he was a man certain sooner or later to fall once more under the dominion of petticoat government, if the daughter could only hold her ground for a time, she stood an excellent chance of having him completely under her thumb for the future.

No one would have been more indignant at all of this than Lady Julia, had Lady Julia not been

entirely engrossed at this period by other and sweeter cares.

It had become all in all to her to nurse, and watch, and brighten, and support the feeble life now struggling back to youth and strength again. To mark the truant colour stealing once more over her darling's cheek, as the weeks rolled by; to note the little daily increase of appetite; to hail with delight the lengthened nightly slumbers; to provide dainties and delicacies, and cater amusement sufficiently simple and unexciting —the while in her heart she built anew her lately shattered castle in the air,—all of this afforded such a round of occupation as left neither time nor inclination for much outside the Abbey precincts. Her days were completely filled up, and, in consequence, she scarcely ever went to King's Common, and knew but little of what went on there.

When Catherine would jump down from the phaeton, and run in to her aunt, all eagerness to know about the sort of night dear Rosamund had passed, and the sort of breakfast she had made, who could find a fault with that? When she would rejoin, in answer to her aunt's vague hints that it might be long before the invalid would be able to resume her wonted place as elder daughter and sister, that if only dear Rosamund's life were spared to them, they ought not to mind how long she was in getting well and coming home, nothing could be prettier.

The Gilberts, root and branch, eliminated, love and kindness for humankind once more returned to inhabit the tender-hearted Lady Julia's bosom—animosity and antagonism being foreign bodies in that soil; and overflowing as she was now with a thankful, tearful felicity, she only felt ready to pity all others not so happy as herself.

Catherine in consequence got off cheap.

She had but little to do. Her fervent inquiries and congratulations, her ready acquiescence in any little scheme for her sister's comfort, and, above all, her protestations that all was going on well at King's Common, but that, of course, they were very dull, very quiet ("and very respectable, just as they should be," internally commented her auditor)—completely satisfied that good lady's mind: the consequence of which was, that the niece stood higher in her aunt's good graces at this period than she had ever done before—or, perhaps, was ever likely to do again.

The poor children, however, were no better off under the new *régime* than under the former ones. Their palmiest days had been, indeed, when Gilbert's influence was young, and had been exerted on their behalf; for now Catherine, flaunting in her new-born state, would no more be troubled with them than would Lady Caroline or Rosamund, and even they had not been more firmly convinced of the efficacy of schoolroom regulations, and the need for the whole remaining eight being invariably kept out of sight and hearing, than was the barely emancipated pupil.

The only difference was that Catherine patronised Miss Penrose, which Rosamund had never done.

Rosamund had been sorry for the little governess, but she had not cared to seek her society; and in her rampant heyday, it is to be feared the wilful girl had done little she had not cared to do. Catherine, however, was now hand in glove with her late preceptress, who, in her turn, would not have been human if she had not enjoyed the turn things had thus taken.

Miss Penrose would be begged to come down to the drawing-room in the evenings, and hear the flute and latest duet—when we may be sure she praised the accompaniment also; she would be invited to accompany Catherine on her shopping expeditions to Longminster, when these came to be more frequent than dear papa cared for, (and dear papa was never troubled to do anything for which he really had a distaste at this time): so there, by Miss Catherine's side in the pony-carriage, though on a lower seat, would perch the little narrow strip of a governess, taking up next to no room, and feeling quite complacent — since, poor soul, the low seat was indubitably better than none at all, and a drive, and a peep at the gay windows, and helping Catherine to make purchases, and standing by while Catherine talked to acquaintances, better than droning on in that endless grind which had swallowed up so many years of her life at King's Common.

She never refused the holiday, or half-holiday, petitioned for by her late pupil, when the little band had been invited to the Abbey to run riot among Lady Julia's pets, and be stuffed with her good things, —but she and Catherine did not make up the party going there. They would be off to the town, to dressmakers, milliners, and what not—Miss Penrose to inspect and admire, Catherine to price and purchase. So many parcels had never found their way to a carriage belonging to King's Common before.

All this time what was Hartland doing?

Getting acclimatised to the new order of things; beginning to be a little more cheerful, a little less silent; to take an imperceptibly growing interest in the state of the fields, the weather, the progress of the new farm-buildings, the stables, the kennels, the spring meetings, and the prospect of the cricketing season.

He was not quite so keen a cricketer as he had been a year or two before—but still he fancied he should not give up his team. He thought he should get together a few good horses, and go in for hunting the following season—there was a prospect of the hunt being improved, and he ought to encourage it. There was still a little shooting, and as Rosamund's condition continued to improve, shooting men came and went, and made some sort of variety. But still there was more needed.

"He requires an out-and-out thorough change," said his friend Stoneby, one day. "You should pack Hartland off, Lady Julia. He is moping here."

"My dear Mr Stoneby, *I* pack Hartland off! Why, nothing on earth would induce him to go. He will not stir from home; he has not slept a night away from the house since—you know when."

"The very reason he should go now."

"I am quite sure he will not go —until Rosamund is better."

"She is out of all danger now, Lady Julia."

"Oh, entirely, dear child; nothing but strength is needed. As soon as she is fit to travel, I propose taking her abroad. Why, to be sure"—and she stopped, and her whole face beamed—"to be sure, if Hartland would go with us——!"

——"No, no, not that," said Mr Stoneby, smiling and shaking his head. "No, Lady Julia, that would not suffice. That would do no good at all," added he, frankly, for he was now drawn by a closer tie than ever to the Abbey inmates, and was known as "Hartland's

dear, kind, invaluable friend" there. "Do you not understand," proceeded he, "that that sort of change would simply be no change? Hartland ought to leave behind him every familiar thought, and voice, and face. He ought to breathe a completely new mental atmosphere. He needs this even more than a physical one. For that very reason I have not offered myself——"

——"Oh, if you would!"

"It would not answer; it would not serve our end, Lady Julia. Let him shake off for the time every one and everything with which is connected a painful association. Let him go over the seas, right away—say to America, across the Rocky Mountains, camp out in the Far West—you will have him come back another man. Before he knows, he will find himself disencumbered of all the cobwebs which the last six months have spun around him. He will knock up new acquaintanceships; form new interests; insensibly drop his melancholy, and—wonder what has become of his liver. I assure you, Lady Julia, a great deal of the gloom which still overshadows Hartland—though it has lightened much of late—is due to a very prosaic and explicable cause. He is capricious about his food, and neglects his hours. Then, for a long time, he took not a third of his usual exercise. Then, he has had no society——"

"Very true indeed," assented poor Lady Julia, as meekly as if she had been to blame for it all; "but, Mr Stoneby, he is so much better than he was."

"He *is* better: he is getting over it," replied Jack; "and for that very reason he is fit to go off by himself, and to get all the good of so doing. We could not have trusted him alone till now."

And he was too anxious," and she shot him a glance.

"Yes, of course. To have left you in your anxiety would have been unfeeling——"

"Oh, Mr Stoneby, you know what I mean."

"You mean that he was unhappy on his own account?"

"I am sure, certain, that he cares for her. And I had so hoped that when she was able to be downstairs and about, and when they could see each other quietly every day, and she could get to know him and appreciate him—oh, you know, I think you know, what is my greatest hope and prayer——" and the fond, imprudent creature clasped her hands, while the water stood in her eyes.

"My dear lady," said Jack, quietly, "has it ever struck you that perhaps, in the old days, if this event which you so earnestly desire had not been put in motion, and prepared for as it were, it might already have come to pass of itself? Believe me, it does not do to try to pull the strings of destiny——"

"We only thought it would be so nice," murmured she.

Who could proceed with a lecture after that?

"Certainly you understand Hartland as no one else does," conceded Lady Julia, recovering herself; "and Rosamund is not—of course—poor darling, she is thin, and pale, and fragile-looking; and with all her beautiful hair gone, she cannot look her best. It *might* be as well that Hartland should not see her just now."

"Quite as well," assented Jack, profoundly.

"She will soon be every bit as pretty—as beautiful as ever," added Lady Julia, jealousy in arms at once. "People are very much mistaken who think she is going to be

a poor, pale invalid for the rest of her life. Still—for the present, we must be thankful to have her as she is. And if you think Hartland should really go——" and she sighed a sigh of resignation.

It was a little hard to have to give up all the cosy prospect of Rosamund as the most interesting of convalescents, making daily progress under Hartland's care;—she had pictured fresh spring mornings, and had seen the two sauntering hither and thither in the sunshine, she leaning her fragile form upon his stalwart arm, he bending over, all pride and protection,—she had seen the happy girl piloted in the broad, low, easy carriage, through green lanes and budding hedgerows — seen the hourly increase of tenderness on the one hand, and confidence on the other, finally ending in the glad avowal —all taking place in her own childhood's home, the home to be also theirs!

Still, if it would be best otherwise, who was she to rebel? Ultimately she decided to sound Hartland, and find out how he felt in the matter.

As she had foreseen, at first he would hear neither reason nor argument, and stood stoutly out against the idea. He had no need of anything of the kind. He was very well where he was. He was not in the mood for travel. If they liked, he would go up to town for a few days, presently. He would go to Liverpool and see the Grand National run. More than that he would not do.

But by degrees the continual droppings, which are said to wear out a stone, had their effect.

Lady Julia, having been brought to perceive that the tempting vision of her two beloveds billing and cooing under her protecting wing, was not perhaps the most likely one to prove a reality, nor, if it did, to produce lasting happiness —since the one stood in scarcely less need of care than the other—ended by throwing herself heart and soul into Mr Stoneby's proposition; was convinced because he was convinced, and resolute because he was resolute.

When Hartland was restored to full health and vigour, and Rosamund to her home and position—then would be the time for love-making proper to recommence. Her other scheme would now, she saw, with the usual adaptability of her sweet and pliable nature, be not without its drawbacks.

Accordingly she was full to the brim of assurances, and prognostications; called in Mr Stoneby to supply arguments, and got hopelessly entangled amidst wilds, deserts, and prairies.

The result, however, was all that was desired.

Hartland was off, and off without seeing his cousin.

"She did not ask to see him, nor he to see her," Lady Julia explained to her confidential adviser thereafter. "Why he did not, I cannot tell; but I think I can guess at dear Rosamund's feelings. Poor child, she does so dislike the sight of herself in the glass. And I am sure a sweeter face—but the little frilled cap is rather trying. I cannot honestly say it is becoming, and I hope she will soon be able to dispense with it. Her hair is beginning to show again nicely, and will be quite lovely within a month or two. Still I think, I do think, it is something to do with that, which makes her shrink from seeing any one; and when I told her Hartland had sent her his 'good-bye,' she seemed rather relieved than otherwise, only a little — perhaps a little — disappointed; but I don't know. One

thing, however, she certainly did not ask to see him."

Not long after the young man's departure, the invalid was pronounced not only fit to be downstairs and out of doors, but to contemplate the trip of which Lady Julia had spoken.

The project accordingly took shape with increased minuteness, and at length grew so alluring and so prominent, that a desire—an unmistakable desire—to partake in it, began to manifest itself on the part of Rosamund's sister.

Could she not be of use in helping to wait upon dear Rosamund? Could she not run about, and fetch and carry for her? Could she not save Aunt Julia trouble, write her letters, and talk French? Miss Penrose had always pronounced her to be the best French scholar in the family, and it would be such a pleasure to talk French for Aunt Julia.

Aunt Julia, however, was not to be tempted. Catherine might be very well at King's Common, and her notable qualities were of service there as keeping all smooth during her sister's enforced absence—so much the good lady was ready to allow; but beyond that, she had no love for her younger niece.

Had Rosamund indeed expressed a wish for her companionship—but Rosamund almost laughed at the suggestion. She and Catherine had never had an idea in common. To Lady Julia she would not now expose her sister, as in old times she had not spared to do, but neither was she going to give in to Catherine yet.

"If it had been Clemmy Stoneby!" she said, and almost before the words had crossed her lips, Clemmy Stoneby it was to be.

"My dear child, what an excellent, what a *first-rate* idea! Of course, Clemmy is the very person. She must and shall come. She is devoted to you, and she,—I will pay all her expenses—everything. We owe so much to her dear, kind, invaluable brother. How thankful we should be to have such a young man for our parish clergyman! And Clementina herself will be quite perfect as a companion. Besides which, I cannot rejoice enough at having it in my power to give her the pleasure."

Poor little Clementina was in the seventh heaven when she had received Jack's consent, and all was arranged.

As for Catherine, she made no complaint. A few weeks after the party had started, they received a note from her, dated from the south of France. Dear papa was taking her the most delightful Continental tour; and she came home with her portmanteaus as full of new dresses, and knick-knacks, as a bride on her wedding-trip.

It was getting time for Rosamund to be at home again.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—SHE HAS HAD HER LESSON.

"Adversity is like the period of the earlier and of the later rain—cold, comfortless, and unfriendly both to men and to animals; yet from thence have their birth the flower and the fruit, the rose, the date, and the pomegranate."—Scott.

At length the truants returned.

All alike had grown weary of endless novelty and unlimited idleness, and pined for the familiar sights and sounds, pursuits and pleasures, delights and even the drawbacks of an English home.

The spring and summer had been passed by Lady Julia and her niece in exploring Italian and

Swiss resorts, wandering about from one grand old city to another, till the heat drove them northward; remaining there for some months among the snow-peaks and glaciers; and finally settling down at a German spa, until the life there became unendurable.

Lord Hartland had had a wider experience. He had travelled fast and far; had seen many strange and stirring sights; traversed mighty rivers; camped out in lonely wildernesses; made countless friends; learned much, heard much, thrown his heart and sympathies abroad in all directions; and had entered into every adventure and enterprise with a zest which had brought its own reward.

He was now, as predicted, another man. Moody, melancholy introspection was gone for ever. Unreasonable woe had vanished. The spring of life was all in bud afresh.

He still loved his cousin; he still felt grief and shame with a chastened pang, when a wave of recollection would now and again break over his spirit as from some dead storm; but, no longer crushed and overwhelmed, he now stood upright, strong to bear the past, and hopeful even of the future.

He would not shun Rosamund, but neither would he sue her.

He thought he could be sure that so far no thought of him as a lover had ever crossed her mind; and if this were the case, a renewal of the old intercourse could be maintained without danger to either, so long as he kept a watch upon himself.

He did not mean to be too bold. Rosamund, according to her aunt, was now more beautiful, more bewitching than ever, and, added to that, the dearest, *dearest* girl in the world. "You can have no idea of the sensation she creates everywhere," wrote Lady Julia. "People are always getting introduced to her; and then they are so angry with me because she refuses to go to their dances, and will not take any part in the amusements that are always going on. This is a very gay place, and there are plenty of pretty girls about, but none to equal Rosamund. So every one says. She cannot help being seen, for she is always out and about—looking so lovely in her white frock and hat—and I may confess to *you* what I should not dare to do to *her*, that sometimes I am tempted to suggest going on the promenade, and hearing a little music at the gay hour, because I cannot resist showing her off, and seeing all the eyes following us. But although she never objects to anything of that sort—(not the admiration, but the walking, and sitting under the trees)—she cannot be persuaded to more. She says she is not strong enough; and, to be sure, she is not *very* strong yet, not quite her old, robust self—but between ourselves, I do not feel that that is altogether the reason. I gather that she thinks she ought not to be amusing herself as other girls do, quite as if nothing had happened. Perhaps she is right, dear child; and it would be terrible if anything of the kind were to begin over again. It might, you know. There are one or two here who are most obvious adorers from afar, and who would need only the slightest encouragement to be at her feet. It is pretty to see how she avoids them, and yet how anxious she is to be kind to all, and never to hurt nor pain anybody. Oh, Hartland, our darling has had a sore and bitter lesson, but the fruits of it are only too sweet. I almost tremble when I think how dear, how very dear she is to me."

Next it was, "Rosamund and I are at last setting off for England. We shall travel slowly, and probably remain a day or two in London, although no one is there now. But Rosamund wishes to get some autumn things for the children, and to see about a new governess."

Rosamund might have spared her pains. She was informed that the children had all been fitted out before she arrived, and Catherine, armed with her father's authority, had already engaged a French mademoiselle, recommended by some of her new acquaintances.

"We did not know when to expect you," she explained subsequently, "and papa thought it a pity to wait. Lady Belmount assured me it was quite a chance that Mademoiselle Forestier was disengaged: so papa said, write at once."

"Who is Lady Belmount?" demanded the elder sister, with something of an accent on the "who."

"Papa and I met her in Paris. She was so kind to us. We saw a great deal of her there."

"I thought you had only been in Paris for a few days?"

"We saw her on nearly all of them."

"Is she your only reference for this French girl?"

"Certainly," said Catherine, drawing herself up. "Papa and I felt that we did not require any other. We were quite satisfied."

Quite satisfied! Sixteen and three-quarters was quite satisfied! Yet in spite of herself, the cold composure in the speaker's eye made the spirit of the other sink. She had no heart for wars and fighting, she was so longing for peace, and love, and kindness, all round; so anxious to be just and forbearing even to Catherine, who must ever be a trial and perplexity, that it did seem hard to be confronted with so grave an offence on the very threshold of her return.

But little did she guess how far things had gone!

Now, at every turn, she found herself being informed of new habits, new customs, new laws—all, as could plainly be perceived, of one person's making, yet none of which were owned by her. Oh dear, no; it was papa who "liked this"; papa who had "grown accustomed to that"; papa who "*never* did" such and such a thing now, or who, contrariwise, "*always* did" it.

Papa showed Catherine his letters. Papa expected her in the library after breakfast. Papa could not spare her to do any lessons, so they had never been resumed. She had had to be everything to papa for so long, that he could not now do without her. It is to be feared that the very sound of papa's name grew at last obnoxious in poor Rosamund's ears.

By degrees she saw it all. The younger had supplanted the elder, and taken away her birthright—and though it must in fairness be added that the birthright in question was one which the latter would never for its own sake have coveted, still she could not stand by and look on, without something of the old, warm blood boiling within.

She had come home fancying that it would never boil again. She had been feeling so humble, so peaceful, so anxious by meek and gentle ways to show her sense of past folly; and resolutions for future amendment: she had felt as if nothing that might be said of her would be too severe, as if the coldness of friends, the condemnation of the world, and the stares of the village folks would be only

her meet punishment,—and had by reflection and prayer strengthened her soul to bear all.

But this peculiar form of retribution was precisely what had not been expected.

It must be remembered that the Catherine known to Rosamund in days gone by had been but a poor creature, at whom she had been used to laugh and flout when a child, and turn her back upon when a woman. In no other character had she beheld her sister until now. During her convalescence, caresses, inquiries, and profuse solicitude had been the order of the day, while not a word had been said to her of the triumphal progress the emancipated schoolroom miss was making to the top of the tree. All had been carefully kept in the background; and now the grand result of the whole broke over the head of the returned wanderer, like a thunderclap. Catherine was all in all.

Mr Liscard, no longer a cipher, but applauded, flattered, and put forward, was by no means inclined to think meanly of any one who gave him such an excellent opinion of himself. Catherine's judgment—since it invariably coincided with his own—was eagerly sought, and pronounced invaluable. He and Catherine could manage everything between them; and perhaps it was but natural that he should add peevishly, that Rosamund had no business to interfere.

"But it is about the children that I mind most," the latter confided to her aunt. "I did so hope to do better for my poor little sisters and brothers than was—was done for me. I may say that to you, may I not? You will understand. But this Mademoiselle Forestier is not the right person for them at all; and yet she is so backed up by papa and Catherine that I can do nothing. They are too strong for me," and Rosamund's lip trembled.

"Too strong for my Rosamund!" said her aunt, gaily. "Nay, my darling, be patient, and do your best. These trials often pass quickly. And you are the eldest daughter—mistress of your father's house——"

——"Neither of these now," said Rosamund, sadly. "I have forfeited my claim to everything, I think. My father almost tells me so. Catherine openly shows it. Even the little Frenchwoman follows their lead. As Catherine engaged her and received her, she all but declines to take so much as a message from any one else. The other day, when I spoke about something I wished to have altered, she looked at me calmly, and said, 'Et Mademoiselle Catherine?'"

"You should speak to your father."

"I have. It did no good."

She did not add that it had done harm,—that Mr Liscard had testily rejoined that really it was a pity she had come home to disturb every one, and that, as she had been so happy with her aunt, he should recommend her continuing to make the Abbey her home, and leaving them to their own quiet ways.

The cruel taunt had pierced deeply, and could be breathed to no one.

Her place, whether for good or ill, was now, Rosamund felt, beneath her parent's roof; and though many, if not most, of her days were spent with Lady Julia, she made a rule of carefully returning every night, and pursuing her quiet round, as though settling down at King's Common for years to come.

This had gone on for some

weeks, when one fine September morning Hartland, bronzed, reddened, big, bright, and hearty, reappeared like a great sun rising on the neighbourhood.

He had been missed by all, and by none more than his young cousins; and their tumultuous greetings and demonstrations—for they had their first sight of his tall figure approaching through the park, while at play there in a holiday hour—acted as a sort of shield for the meeting which had been alike longed for and dreaded by two of the group.

Rosamund had been sitting a little apart; the day was warm, and there was but a faint tint in her cheeks. He thought she did not look as well as he had expected, and that the little hand which rested for a moment in his felt small and thin. He told his aunt afterwards that, in his opinion, his cousin had a good deal of leeway yet to make up, ere she could regain what she had lost. He told himself that he had done very well; got over the first sight of her bravely; and could feel confidence in his hold over his heart for the future.

Foolhardy mortal! Lady Julia needed not to have sighed so dolefully as he left the room—nor Catherine to have simpered and bridled, and been sure that Hartland had come home more delightful than ever, because he had addressed to her the chief part of his travel-talk. The old spell was at work again before any of them knew—before he knew himself.

First of all recommenced the old habit of walking in and out of King's Common at all hours and seasons; then there would be long lingerings in the dusk, when by chance Rosamund was met in the gardens or shrubberies; long talks in the bay-window, waiting for the driving party, who, it not infrequently happened, would be late in coming back—(Catherine liking much to look in for her tea at this house and the other in the neighbourhood)—and instant recollections of Lady Julia's waiting for him, and speedy departure, immediately the room filled.

To be sure, the cousins were not quite so easy together as they had used to be; and instead of boldly claiming her company for a stroll, as he had been wont to do, Hartland must needs now manœuvre to get it, and look black, and say not a word, if frustrated. He would not say openly "Two's company, three's none," as he had not scrupled to do the year before, when desirous of getting rid of Catherine, who was no more a favourite with him than with her sister—but he would hearken diligently to any plans let fall, and base his line of operations accordingly.

Catherine used to wonder how it was that they had invariably missed him, when she and her father had been out on one of their long afternoon excursions. At such times he would be over early, and he would stay late. He would not quit the side of her whom he had come to see—no, not for a moment. Out of doors, if a child ran up and pressed between them, he would lift it aside; within, whatever seat she took, he would draw his near. As the time passed, he would press still closer, take an interest in the book she had been reading, the work she had been doing, in anything that enabled him to lean over her chair, and make her turn her head his way.

His voice would be low and soft; he would halt before her name,—and yet the name would be oftener on his lips than perhaps it should have been. He did not

talk to Rosamund about his travels, and his new friends, and new experiences, as he did to Catherine or to Dolly; it seemed as if he had nothing to say about them to this other auditor—as if for her he had her own topics.

And when the long, dreamy, desultory *tête-à-tête* would at last be rudely broken in upon by the return of the driving party, noisy and merry, the Hartland who rose and straightened himself up at their approach, would be quite another person than Rosamund's companion in the low chair during the past hour or two.

He would seldom be induced to stop on.

An evening at King's Common meant not only being usurped by one or other of the two who had no attractions for him, but a growing indignation on another's behoof. But little perception was needed to understand how matters stood in the readjusted household, and, guided by Lady Julia, he could hardly go wrong. He felt dangerous on the subject, and being a peaceable man, thought it best to avoid explosive opportunities.

But he got to know better and better at what times Rosamund would be alone, and the spots she haunted—and I fear me he somewhat avoided his friend Jack Stoneby at this time—good cause as he had to love and bless Jack.

Stoneby, of course, saw plainly enough what was coming, and was not, upon the whole, certain of what he himself desired.

He desired Hartland's happiness, and Rosamund's happiness—and what with time and absence, and the never having had any hopes for himself, joined to the advent of a very nice, and pretty, and amiable young lady in the neighbourhood, he was able quite cheerfully to unite the two in his mind—but he did feel he should have liked to have had some sign from Gilbert first.

For some weeks after Gilbert's departure, while Rosamund still lay hovering between life and death, Stoneby had conscientiously fulfilled his promise of letting her former lover know her state, and had duly received a few words of thanks in reply to each communication. From these he had learned that Major Gilbert had exchanged into a regiment ordered to Burmah, and the last note received from him had been from the frontier there.

There he was, and there he was likely to be for long enough—doing a little fighting, and running odds and ends of risks; but the great war for which his soul thirsted was nowhere to be found. The world was unusually quiet a dozen years ago.

"I wish he could see some action," said Jack to himself, as he folded up the latest missive—"it would do Gilbert more good than anything; and perhaps if that were to intervene between him and his past disappointment, what with activity and hard work, and all the things he would have to think of and to do, he would learn to judge more kindly of poor Hartland, and be able to send him a message. The worst of it is, that I fear the whole thing will slip from his memory. These sort of affairs take so little hold of a man engaged in active life; and he will naturally not care to recall this more than he can help. He may have got somebody else by this time," added the young man, with a little nod to himself—and he went and paid a visit to his "somebody else," that very afternoon.

It was a mild, showery day, almost too warm for the time of

year, and with no suggestion of the blustering autumn winds yet in store.

Rosamund, wandering about among the late roses in the old, unfashionable rosery at the bottom of the garden, was hidden from view between the tall briery hedges, and somewhat sharply taxed for being so by Catherine, who at four o'clock came to seek her, post-bag in hand.

"You knew the afternoon post would be coming in," she said. "It is too bad of you to give me all this run after you."

"I never asked you to run after me;" and the speaker's tone added, "nor did I want you to do it."

"I supposed you would like to have your letters!"

"You supposed you would like to know what was in them." Rosamund could yet turn the tables in a neat retort, and, truth to tell, she did not allow herself to get altogether out of practice. She did not care in the slightest degree about her letters that day, and she did care about being left to her rose-garden solitude, and perhaps just a little also about another interruption to it which had now and again happened before, and which might as likely as not happen again—but which Catherine's presence would inevitably mar. "I don't suppose they are of any consequence," she added, holding out an ungracious hand.

"Oh, but they are—at least, they are very interesting to look at from the outside," said Catherine, prudently waiving further discussion, and the risk of a quarrel, for the sake of gratifying her curiosity. "They look like invitations."

They were invitations. The October shooting dinner-parties were now being arranged, and people generally were beginning to think that King's Common had done its part in the way of mourning and retirement, and that the widower was ready to be consoled, or at any rate to be beguiled, by the seductions of a little neighbourly society.

One and all had concluded that at any rate he might be tried; and that Rosamund also might be tried.

It was said that she did not mean to go out—that would be ridiculous. Every one knew that the poor girl had suffered enough; and she was so young, and had been so neglected—(poor Lady Caroline!)—that it would be cruel to visit her sins heavily on her head.

And undoubtedly there would be also something interesting in Rosamund Liscard just now, which would add to her attractions in the eyes of all who heard her story,—something to whisper about and nod about,—something to make a hostess grateful for. So that, considering how seldom it is that a poor county lady, buried in respectability and domestic interests, has even the faintest flavour of spice to throw into her ingredients for a shooting dinner-party, the writers of the several gilt-edged notes which Catherine now eagerly produced, may be pardoned if they were a little early in the day in sending them, and a little anxious about their acceptance.

"Mr and Miss Liscard," read out she, enviously, as they were opened one by one. "I suppose you will go? I could hardly go till next spring, unless—I shall be seventeen, you know, directly; so that if you——"

"There, take them! They are all of the same order," cried her sister, hastily thrusting the packet back upon her. "You can ask papa about them. Ask him now, if you like. He is at home——"

——"No, he is not; he is gone for his walk."

"He went in this minute,—I saw him. He had forgotten a letter he had to write."

"And what am I to ask him?"

"About these, of course," impatiently. "What is to be done about them? I think myself that it is too soon for us to dine out yet. I think we,—or at any rate *he*, ought to let a year pass; but I will do as he wishes."

"I *could* go, you know, if you——"

"Well, go then,—you may go for me——"

"Do you really mean that? May I consult with papa——?"

"Yes, consult with papa—go in now and consult with him,—oh, that will do," as Catherine's mouth was opening to begin again; "I tell you, you may go if you want—only do not stand arguing and expounding there——" the words were scarcely out of her lips, ere their astonished auditor, in terror of a revocation, and already conning over the means by which she could with propriety carry out so delightful a permission (she told herself she did not mind in the least Rosamund's being cross over it), sped off like the wind, and the latter's end was attained.

She was alone; and only a large black-edged envelope remained in her hand, which neither the one sister, nor the other, dreamed could contain anything worth any one's waiting for.

It was probably some milliner's or dressmaker's bill; and the person chiefly interested in these, did not covet over-much being present when one of them came in. Catherine's spring orders had been tolerably extensive, and had somewhat startled even herself by the sum total to which they had mounted,—she would not, on account of some tiresome shopwoman, delay seeking out dear papa, and telling him what Rosamund had said—(it was a way of this young diplomatist's always to father a sentiment of her own, on somebody else, when possible)—and accordingly, she was well out of sight, ere the other absently undid the fastenings of the despised document.

The next moment saw it despised no longer.

"Emily Gilbert!" she exclaimed aloud, as the signature in large letters caught her eye,—"Emily Gilbert! And writing to me! What is it—what can it be?"

With feverish haste her eye flew over the page, and the blood seemed to surge back from her heart.

He was dead—the man who had loved and lost her.

Dead! She paused to think, to understand. Dead! How, dead? *Dead!* Yes, the words were there, unmistakably there.

He had been killed in a night sortie among the frontier mountains, some weeks before. Some weeks before! And she—she had never heard, had never been told, and had been going on her way, contented and happy;—even beginning to—to—her cheek burned all over with a deep crimson flush.

Gilbert dead—some time dead—and she had not even mourned him!

That, for a few moments, swallowed up every other thought and emotion.

But how had she not heard—how not known?

The writer explained that only now had her poor brother's effects arrived at his sorrowing home, and that she thought it probable Miss Liscard had not noticed the record of his death in the newspapers, there having been a mistake in the name which no one had cared to rectify till too late. She now only

intruded, poor Emily wrote — a mournful indignation shadowing itself forth beneath the humility —she only intruded because the enclosed had been found among her brother's papers. As the enclosed had been addressed to Miss Liscard, she had felt that Miss Liscard would like to have it, or that at least they ought to send it.

In the whole there was a pitiful attempt at dignity which was hardly successful. Just where the brother would have succeeded, the sister failed.

Rosamund, however, was in no mood to carp. The strange, sudden, terrible tidings were enough; the little packet with her name upon it in writing once so familiar—could she have eyes for aught beside?

The paper had a dark-red stain upon it.

"Dear," it ran, "I feel to-night, although I know not why, as if I must write one word to you for the last—last time. I had never meant that you should hear from me again; but neither will you, unless the strange forebodings which have haunted me so unceasingly of late, prove to be true. I will bear this in my bosom, and only by my death, shall it find its way to you. It may be a weak fancy, Rosamund, but I seem to feel that the end is coming at last, and coming soon. I have not sought death, but neither have I shunned it. I have hoped for it, and expected it, and I think I shall have it, perhaps before many hours are over. There has been an outbreak among the natives here, and who knows to what extent the mischief may not have spread? It is a wild, dark night, and we are going out upon the hills in search of the rebels. They tell me these rebels give no quarter. Why should they? We give them none. . . . Oh, Rosamund, Rosamund! why are you with me, day and night, day and night now? I am looking at you as I write. I see you standing there in the dim light. I hear your voice; I almost feel your breath. Where are you? I wonder what you are doing. I wonder if you are happy. My dear, if my love would have made you so, you had it all, you have it now: whether I live or die, I am yours only, and yours wholly. But mine was not enough. Be Hartland's wife then, if you can love him. I know he loves you. Marry him, and remember that this is what I wish and desire. I no longer doubt him; I feel convinced that I never ought to have doubted him, and you must tell him so,—when he tells you, as he will, what once I felt. I have written to him a few words also. He may like to have them straight from me. Why need I mind saying more? I shall have left this world if your eye ever falls upon these pages, and why should I not tell you that I humbly hope I shall have left it for a better? Rosamund, by the grace of God the ruin of my earthly happiness has been the means of leading me to seek it from a higher source. I turned to my Maker, and He heard me, and will receive me. May He bless you, preserve you, keep you, make you happy here and hereafter——" The writing ended in a pale smear: a summons had come in haste, and the hand that had dropped the pen, had lain stiff and powerless ere the morrow's light had dawned.

The paper had been thrust into his bosom, as he had said, and had been there—the dark stain told when.

With bursting sighs and blinding tears she hung over the page, at times invisible and almost incomprehensible. How often had

she wondered what would be the end?—What the years would bring?—Whether he would forget?—Would suffer his wound to be gently healed?—Would ever again cross her path?

And now in that far-off clime he had fallen—not gloriously as in the field, leading his men to victory with the sound of trumpet and the clang of arms,—but in some dismal, unknown spot, nameless and unhonoured. To this, she cried—to this her hand had driven him! Great Heaven! was she never to come to the end of that harvest of her thoughtless sowing?

True, his sorrow had brought him a rich return, but in that she had had no share. The one had been of her making, but not the other; and can we blame her if at the moment this was the pang that was uppermost?

A step upon the gravel—a voice in her ear. "I think," said a man's deep undertone, subdued to tenderness unmistakable—"I think, Rosamund, that we have both heard the same tidings. . . . Shall I show you mine?" But she scarcely knew whether his arm enfolded her, or whether she clung to him; whether he or she held the new letter; or whether she read with his eyes or her own.

"You are a man of honour," it ran. "If I ever tried to doubt it, time and reflection have proved too strong for me. But I think I always believed in you, Lord Hartland—though it was a kind of opiate to my pain to resolve that I did not. To-night I go into action, and before going I shall write to Rosamund. Show her this. Win her if you can. Make her happy."

The command had been obeyed on the instant.

. . . . . .

. . . "Have I made you happy?"

said Hartland, a few years afterwards. "Have I done all I ever hoped and vowed to do? Is there anything you desire, anything I can give you, anything that would make my Rosamund happier? What? There is? Speak, dearest—I can trust you. You have but to name your wish. You shall go where you will, do what you will——"

The answer came so low that he could scarcely catch it—

"I want to see his grave."

A few words in conclusion about the other personages who have played their parts before our readers.

And first, for Lady Julia. Her cup was now full to the brim, and would have run and bubbled over, but for the little daily friction occasioned by the sight of Catherine reigning unchecked, and in all her glory, at King's Common. Had she known how long that reign was to last—extending until the very sight of her name as Miss Liscard became odious in the eyes of the thin-visaged, sharp-voiced spinster, suitor after suitor having been frightened away by her ill-concealed shrewishness, and the subjection of her only remaining parent—even Aunt Julia would have been satisfied. As it was, it was perhaps really as well that the good aunt had that crumpled rose-leaf, all the rest of her bed was so wondrous easy.

Rosamund, with a chastened spirit and nobler views of life, growing ever gentler and tenderer, while regaining yearly more and more of the radiance of her youth in the sunshine of such a home, was perhaps the first darling of her heart. But Hartland was a close second—and deserved it. He, too, could never show her affection enough.

Mr Liscard never re-entered the married state, getting on fairly well without a second wife,—though it was said of him that he never again had so good a time, as during that first year of his widowhood, and more especially during the three first months of it.

Mrs Waterfield, on hearing of Rosamund's new engagement, made no remark of any kind, not choosing to animadvert, and perhaps not feeling drawn towards exhibiting any very exuberant demonstrations of pleasure. Perhaps these could hardly have been expected of her. Diana was out, too, by this time.

Jack Stoneby married well and happily, but kept his secret—a secret of which neither Lord nor Lady Hartland ever had the slightest suspicion—to the end of his life.

Clementina also married, having found out that the next best thing to a devoted brother is a devoted husband.

Billy Barley throve apace, and had to be incessantly watched and scolded, or he would have had a dip in the mill-dam again as regularly as the summer came round, in spite of his father's pride in pointing at him and saying, "Ay, it's nought but a corp that boy there o' ours would ha' been this day, if it hadn't been for one of the grandest gentlemen i' the land, who's gone himself now—the Lord bless his memory!" . . .

It was said of Lady Hartland in after years, that nothing could be more beautiful and touching than the care with which she began to train her little troop of high-spirited sons and daughters, even from their cradles.

It was one of the rules of her life to mark and learn the character of each child, to win the confidence of all, and to give her own in return.

She never sought to master them by sheer dint of strength and will, nor to override them with the upper hand; still less to provoke them by her prejudices and unreasonableness to assert their crude and immature judgments in defiance of her own.

But what was, perhaps, more effectual than even this, was the humility and readiness with which, so soon as she found herself mistaken, or learned that she had been in error, Rosamund was willing to avow it.

Such example could not fail to have more effect than any amount of precept; and it is therefore not to be wondered at that the children of such a mother, though by no means likely to become either a tame or timid crew, were, on the other hand, tolerably sure never to draw upon themselves the epithet of A Stiff-necked Generation.

THE LIFE OF RICHARD LORD WESTBURY.

LORD WESTBURY[1] was the most conspicuous legal figure of this century, and it is right that his life should be written. He achieved the highest eminence as an advocate and a judge. He won a very high place in both Houses of Parliament. He accomplished much as a law reformer. But he wrote no book, he kept no diary; a valuable portion of his correspondence was soon after his death accidentally destroyed. His biographer has accordingly derived his information mainly from Lord Westbury's family and a few surviving friends. He had himself no personal acquaintance with the subject of his book; and as a generation has passed away since Bethell left the bar, the personal recollections of contemporaries are no longer available in respect of a very active and interesting portion of his career. Hansard and the law reports, of course, were open to him. Some of Lord Westbury's letters have been published in this book, but a good many of them, especially those to Mr Henry Reeve, are not very interesting. The reader quits the book feeling that the materials are flimsy, that the author is not quite equal to his task, and that the book hardly sustains or satisfies the interest in Lord Westbury's career which is derived from memory and tradition.

We will endeavour to note the main points upon which light has been thrown on Bethell's marvellous career. He very early developed great bodily strength and capabilities of endurance — those indispensable conditions of the highest success at the bar. The circumstances of his childhood explain much in his subsequent career. His grandfather died when the child was six years old. His father, owing to family quarrels, was scarcely mentioned in the will, and in addition had lost his money in unfortunate investments. From that time his family were involved in the direst pecuniary embarrassment. The struggles of those early days, the self-denying efforts of his parents to develop his great powers by education, the habits of industry, energy, and self-reliance which were then created, influenced his character to the latest hours of his life. Family affection was strongly developed; but contracted sympathies with others, and a concentrated determination to push his own way, resulted. He retained to the last a devoted attachment to his father's memory; his own family and relations in later life were inspired with a similar feeling towards himself; but all the circumstances of his childhood, of his youth, and of his manhood spent in the rivalries and contentions of the Chancery bar, were unfavourable to the growth of that wide human sympathy without which no one can become a leader of men, or wield any considerable influence over his fellow-creatures. A powerful intellect, detached, self-reliant, and all-sufficient, is capable of making a man a powerful and even dreaded athlete, but it must be combined with qualities to which Lord Westbury was a stranger, if it is to command confidence or enthusiasm.

A very high degree (a first in

[1] The Life of Richard Lord Westbury. By Thomas Arthur Nash, B.A., Barrister-at-Law. 2 vols. London: Richard Bentley & Son. 1888.

classics and a second in mathematics), gained in 1818, when he was less than eighteen years old, was followed by four years' residence in Oxford as a "coach." It was during this experience that his biographer thinks he acquired that precision of manner which was his most marked characteristic—that "man-millinery" of style, consisting of a mincing manner and affected utterance, which one of his critics imputed to him. He came to London in 1822, and was called to the bar at the end of the following year. Whatever the peculiarities of his manner and style, he undoubtedly brought with him audacity and strength, unlimited confidence in his own powers, prompt perception, unrivalled clearness in his exposition either of details or of argument, a command of language which enabled him to express with accuracy the slightest shades of difference in meaning, and indefatigable diligence. Add to this a caustic wit, and absolute indifference to what was said to himself either by bench or bar, and you have a champion armed at all points, of whom it may be safely predicted that, whatever else he may do, he will certainly succeed in making his way for himself and his clients.

The period of his life before he took silk (1823-1840) has no very marked incidents of public interest. He married in 1825, and in his intervals of relaxation he rowed, he fished, and he played cricket with his children. Having had an extremely rough time of it during the distracting anxieties which surrounded his childhood, he was glad to get some experience of joyous youth in the companionship of his own children, whose lives, of course, were cast in happier circumstances. As far as practice was concerned, he was soon immersed in the bankruptcy and equity business of the Court of Exchequer. Later on came a period when shoals of informations and petitions were filed in Chancery against corporations and other bodies, as trustees for charitable purposes, with a view to impeach their possession or management of the property intrusted to them. These, of course, were lucrative cases, and a large share of them fell to Bethell. The picture which the biographer gives of the leaders in court during Bethell's earlier years is not a pleasing one. Sugden treated counsel opposed to him with scant courtesy, indulged in a snappishness to be tolerated only in men of his eminence. Bickersteth "would fix the judge with a horny eye from which there was no escape." What that may mean baffles conjecture. Knight Bruce would adopt a tone of intellectual superiority towards his opponents, and, as he swept away their arguments, eye them through his glasses with an air of whimsical compassion. Leach, as Master of the Rolls, was so irritable in temper and ungoverned in speech, that a deputation of the leaders of his court waited upon him to remonstrate against his discourtesy. Where this standard of manners prevailed—not, certainly, the highest which cultivated men would seek and desire to attain—it may well be believed that Bethell would be equal to any emergency, and that his example would not tend to the general improvement. Wit, satire, and sarcasm, inspired by boundless intellectual arrogance, and indulged in by a man who was utterly heedless of the antagonism which he evoked, were his contributions to the good-fellowship of the place. His irritating language once, as his biographer puts it, "provoked a retort which took the unusual

and unprofessional form of personal violence applied to his nasal organ." And in letting his furnished house to a naval officer, his contemptuous treatment of his tenant in reference to "pots and pans" provoked a challenge, from which he was only rescued by the tact of his friends. The fact is, that the Chancery Courts are not the best school of manners. Where counsel have to deal with living witnesses and jurymen, and pass from court to court in different parts of the country, they live, move, and have their being in a sphere too wide to foster the growth of petty personal feelings. But in Chancery Courts, where the leaders are as much confined to one court as the judge, where the proceedings are mostly on paper, and the only personal feelings which come into play are those of the rival disputants, and those which result from coping with the intellect and temper of a single judge—heading a wild cow, as it is sometimes irreverently called—it is easy to understand that the whole atmosphere of the place becomes permeated by the idiosyncrasies and humours of the more prominent actors. Mark Patteson's memorials have shown that the passions of a cloister are quite as engrossing and much more venomous than those of the outer world. The few specimens of Chancery spite, *tempore* Bethell, which are given in this book, strike one as unmanly. "What you are pleased to call your mind" is a very celebrated specimen of the class of thing which passes current for caustic wit. Said by a leader in large practice to a junior in his first struggles, it loses whatever recommendation it may have ever possessed in the way either of design or of execution. Strange that a man of Bethell's indisputable eminence should so frequently, according to all accounts, have sacrificed to such a paltry attempt at wit a man's title to respect for self-restraint, forbearance, and courtesy.

During the time of Bethell's leadership in Chancery, he achieved the highest reputation in advocacy. It is said that when he was replying in any great case, the court was usually crowded with the ablest young men, fresh from the University, who considered that to hear Bethell was a liberal education in advocacy. His former master, Mr Lee, when he had retired from practice on account of advancing years, was known to be in the habit of donning his robes and sitting in court to hear his pupil's arguments in important suits. His renown as an advocate was so great, that one of the most disappointing parts of Mr Nash's book is, that no sufficient specimens are given of his style, nor are his great successes brought home to the reader. General descriptive expressions, not always very precise in their meaning, do not avail to give an adequate account of this large portion of Bethell's career. It ought to have been written by some one more familiar with it, but probably the time has now passed by. Lord Wensleydale (no mean critic) used to say that Bethell was the finest advocate he had ever listened to; and an experienced solicitor is quoted as saying, "After he had finished his argument, I felt that not one word that could be usefully and advantageously said had been left unsaid, and still more, that not one word had been said which had better have been left unsaid."

Bethell's parliamentary career, however, is that portion of his life in which the general public will take most interest. In both

Houses of Parliament he maintained the ascendancy which his enormous intellectual power at once secured to him. Of course, in either House he came at once into collision with its foremost spirits. No man in either House so closely resembled Mr Gladstone in the class and character of his intellect—Mr Gladstone, we mean, as he was in his prime, not as in his more recent developments; and perhaps the closest encounters which either of them ever experienced were those in which they contended with each other. But he was not born or bred a party man, nor had he the capacity for acting in concert with others which English public life requires. The difference between them did not end there. Both may be described as *subtilissimi doctores* who would have done credit to the middle ages. But Bethell was as a speaker cool, accurate, unsympathetic, terse. As a politician, he was indifferent to office and to public life—careless of public opinion; as a man, he was a despiser of morals, cynically impatient of cant about religion, self-contained and self-restrained to the point of being his own enemy; a lover of truth, a hater of party, whose thin, mincing, but clear and penetrating voice never wasted a word, who thought more than he spoke, and detested writing. As a barrister, he was respected, hated, and feared by bench and bar. In both Houses of Parliament he inspired similar sentiments.

Bethell's ambition and pride lay in the development of his professional powers: a seat in Parliament was necessary as a road to the woolsack, and was reluctantly sought and obtained; his only *rôle* was that of a law reformer. He was elected for Aylesbury in 1851. It is amusing to note that, while as a candidate he made excellent speeches, he utterly abhorred canvassing. "He was very irritable," said an electioneering companion, "and could not endure those bores" who, as electors, were continually applying for private advantages, and who were met by their candidate with surprising vigour and frankness. "To suffer fools gladly" was quite beyond the range of Bethell's power. He took his seat on the Ministerial benches behind Lord John Russell, having previously been a member of the Conservative Club, from which he was forthwith expelled. It appears from a letter that he found it impossible to join the Peelites, impossible to act with the Protectionists, and impossible to support the feeble, imbecile Government of Lord John Russell. Nothing could be more characteristic than this state of mind; but necessity has no choice, and accordingly he sat behind the Ministry.

He began his career in Parliament by urging on its attention the subject of Chancery reform. But, to use his own complaint, the Derby Government of 1852 put their sickle into the field of standing corn which a Liberal Government considered that it had brought to maturity. That is a very usual complaint against Conservative Governments. It was Lord St Leonards who carried the Common Law Procedure Act and the Acts for establishing the Master's office and improving the jurisdiction in equity. These measures revolutionised common law and equity procedure. Mr Bethell had sat on the Chancery Reform Commission, and added to his reputation by his speeches on these measures, for which, however, the Conservative Administration was entitled to full credit.

Still Bethell was, and proved himself later on to be, a thorough legal reformer; and in 1846, long before he got into Parliament, or apparently even contemplated a parliamentary career, he tried to reform the Inns of Court, and to set on foot a comprehensive system of legal education.

When the Coalition Government, of sinister reputation, was formed, Bethell became Solicitor-General. In his first speech he announced that as regards legal reform much remained to be done, and that he would never rest content until common law and equity jurisdiction had been finally consolidated. That consummation was not reached till after Bethell's death, and it involved the destruction of the old historical tribunals of the country —institutions which reached back to the very birth of the nation, but all of which were swept away in order to fuse legal and equitable jurisdiction, and consolidate the tribunals of the country into one court. Bethell early in his official career exhibited his complete self-reliance, and, not to put too fine a point upon it, his superb contempt, for all who differed from him, even when they were law lords of established authority. The Lord Chancellor, for instance, carried a Registration Bill through the House of Lords, and sent it down to the Commons. There it was rejected, and Lord Campbell declared that "it was lost through the opposition of Sir Richard Bethell, who was allowed to defeat a measure which the Chancellor had introduced, and on which the credit of the Government materially depended." Whether that complaint was justified or not, it was known that Sir Richard Bethell disapproved the measure. One of Bethell's principal efforts as Solicitor-General was in the assistance which he gave to Mr Gladstone in passing the Succession Duty Act of 1853. The two fought side by side in support of that Bill, but their united efforts have proved much less interesting historically than their fierce contentions four years later over the memorable Divorce Act. Sir Alexander Cockburn and Sir Richard Bethell were Attorney and Solicitor General during the whole career of this ill-starred Coalition two of the most celebrated legal figures of this century. It reminds one that the equally unfortunate Administration of Lord North was upheld by the two most conspicuous lawyers of last century—or, as Gibbon expressed it, the Minister might indulge in repose while he was upheld on either side by the rugged sense of Thurlow and the skilful eloquence of Wedderburn. Shortly after Lord Palmerston, who had chiefly attracted the allegiance of these two legal luminaries, became Prime Minister, Cockburn became Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas, and Bethell became Attorney General

One of his latest acts before his promotion was to denounce in the House of Commons the manner in which the House of Lords was exercising its appellate jurisdiction, which had fallen into the hands of Lords Cranworth, Brougham, and St Leonards. The two latter, he said, were mere volunteers. They felt themselves at liberty to attend or not attend as they pleased; and if they attended, to remain or not during the arguments as they pleased. The position of things no doubt at that time was discreditable. The Government tried to remedy it by granting life-peerages to experienced judges, but the attempt was frustrated. Ten years later the evil was met very much as Bethell had wished —

namely, by the creation of Lords of Appeal with life-peerages.

The dissolution of Parliament in 1857, and the circumstances which led to it, prevented attention to anything but purely party matters in the early part of that year. After the dissolution, Lord Palmerston's great majority was practically placed at the service of Sir Richard Bethell to carry important measures of legal reform. He forthwith carried an Act to make fraudulent breaches of trust criminally punishable, and also to make the criminal law applicable to the delinquencies of directors of public companies, a great number of which were springing into existence under the limited liability principle established in the previous year. This was followed by a Testamentary Jurisdiction Act, by which the old Ecclesiastical Courts were deprived of their jurisdiction over wills, and a Probate Court established. And then came the grand question of Divorce, with which for good or for evil the name of Sir Richard Bethell is inseparably associated.

That Act was the one great achievement of the great majority of 1857. Its principle and provisions aroused, as was natural, the most determined opposition. Bishop Wilberforce and Mr Gladstone were two of its most vehement, not to say furious opponents. There was, moreover, a large infusion of heated personal feeling. Both those opponents were personally obnoxious to Lord Palmerston, who, then at the height of his power, met a demand for delay by a peremptory refusal, and the statement that he would keep Parliament sitting to the middle of September if necessary in order to pass the Bill. The contest thus animated was mainly waged between the Attorney-General and Mr Gladstone. The former contended that the principle of the dissolubility of marriage for grave causes was acknowledged at the Reformation; that by error, or by the intervention of the Star Chamber, the Ecclesiastical Courts were prevented from dissolving them; that Parliament had been obliged to interfere and grant parliamentary divorces—that is, by Acts of Parliament after judicial inquiry by Parliament—the bishops age after age making no objection; that the Bill transferred the jurisdiction exercised by Parliament to a court established for that purpose; and that to reject it involved the condemnation of the existing practice of legislation, and of all that had been done for the last two hundred years. The latter argued that the Legislature had no power to absolve a man from spiritual vows taken before God at marriage; that by carrying divorce to the door of men of all classes, it was as completely novel as if it had no parliamentary precedent; that it was demonstrable theologically that marriage was indissoluble; that to shake the idea of the marriage contract was the first stage on the road to heathenism. The Act has now been in force for thirty years, and these arguments have now lost much of their interest. The debate, however, foreshadowed the rise of parliamentary obstruction. Clause by clause, line by line, and at times almost word for word, the progress of the measure was challenged. The Attorney-General alone supported the measure from the Treasury Bench. Mr Gladstone, who was up and down twenty times in a night, and a host of others, struggled vehemently against it. It was generally admitted that Bethell rose to the occasion, and, both intellectually and in respect of physical endur-

ance, was a match for all his opponents. The biographer says that while Mr Gladstone was *more suo* in a white heat of excitement, arguing with intolerable vehemence, and indulging in personal acrimony and invective, the Attorney-General sat composedly getting up the Shrewsbury peerage case, in which he was engaged before the House of Lords. When his great opponent had ceased, he would rise, and having in a few words dealt with the points raised, would resume his seat and his work. However, all contests come to an end in time. The Bill was carried; and Bethell's own account of his performance, as expressed in a letter to a member of his family, was as follows:—

"I have had to maintain my ground and vindicate one of the worst drawn, miserably expressed Bills I ever saw in my life, against a host. Gladstone's violence also gave a vehement personal character to the debates. In the middle of it I was obliged to sit up the small portions left of two nights in the House of Commons to get up the Shrewsbury peerage case. However, it has done me very little harm in body or mind. I am a little tired, but the others are much worn and jaded."

Sir Henry Layard, who sat in Parliament at that time, thought that Bethell was unrivalled for close reasoning and lucid expression, and that in the divorce debates he far surpassed as a debater and logician all his antagonists. Bethell, on the other hand, used to say that Mr Gladstone was the only debater in the House whose subtlety of intellect and dialectic skill made it a pleasure to cross swords with him.

Early in the next year Lord Palmerston's Government was thrown out, the legislative successes of his great majority having been entirely due to the Attorney-General, whose claims to the woolsack seemed to be indisputable. The Government, however, fell on the Conspiracy to Murder Bill, which was introduced on Sir Richard's advice. He advised that if foreigners conspired in this country to commit a crime, and then actually committed it abroad, they were not by the existing law punishable here, and that the law should in that respect be altered. The Bill was thrown out, owing to the dictatorial tone assumed by France in respect to it. But the law lords one and all declared that Sir Richard was totally wrong in his law, and that foreigners had no impunity in respect of conspiracy which would be criminal in natural-born subjects. In that view the Bill was unnecessary, and Sir Richard had advised the Government to their ruin. He distinguished himself in opposition to Lord Derby's second Administration; but when Lord Palmerston returned to power in 1859, the woolsack was not forthcoming. He was, of course, extremely disappointed. The most flattering explanation was, that he could not be spared from the Commons. The real explanation probably was, that in patching together the Liberal party, the rival claims of Lord John's and Lord Palmerston's nominees could not be adjusted; and so Lord Campbell in his eightieth year was promoted as a convenient stop-gap. Bethell gave way; and it is due both to him and his biographer to say, that when we pass to his life from the memoirs with which the world has been favoured of Lords Lyndhurst, Brougham, and Campbell, we pass to an atmosphere of considerably less shameless self-seeking, and to one pervaded by higher aims and greater desire to render valuable services to the public.

He worked harmoniously with the new Lord Chancellor during his two years' tenure of office. The only incidents of vexation recorded are, that not having accepted at the time Lord Palmerston's offer of a written promise, to be fulfilled at the next vacancy, he could not afterwards get it. *Accipe dum dolet*, he hinted to the Premier, —take your note when you can get it; afterwards to ask for it will be odious. It may be only a coincidence, but the Attorney-General managed to unearth an old statute of George III., under which five members of the Cabinet were liable to a stamp-duty on their appointments of £200 each, payment of which they had evaded. He formally demanded these payments through the Prime Minister, threatening to file informations in the Court of Exchequer unless they were paid within a week. *Accipe dum dolent*, he urged on the Chancellor of the Exchequer,—present each with a pen whilst repentance is strong on him, and bid him pay that which he owes. The money in each case was paid, and formed a slight pecuniary reminder that Bethell was still Attorney-General and not Lord Chancellor. To fine some members of the Cabinet £1000 was, under the circumstances, a solace to his feelings. The letter written to Mr Gladstone on this subject is the most interesting one in the book, and a most characteristic specimen of his wit and pleasantry—caustic enough, but deriving a good deal of its pungency from its tinge of malice. It is quite possible, however, that in reality his mind was free from malice: he was most thick-skinned himself, and probably underrated the effect of his biting speeches; certain it is that before a Young Men's Christian Association at Wolverhampton he attributed his success in life to his universal benevolence of disposition and conduct. His second term of office was signalised by carrying the great Bankruptcy Act of 1861.

Some insight into Bethell's personal relations to the Cabinet during these two years of office is given in this book. A masterful subordinate, who is dissatisfied and discontented with the treatment he has received, is not an easy colleague. Apparently he did not consider the aged Lord Campbell worth taking into his confidence over his law reforms, for there is a note in Lord Campbell's diary, shortly before the meeting of Parliament in 1861, complaining that, in spite of Mr Attorney's magniloquent professions, he had been unable to get from him a draft of any of his bills. So far from consulting the Cabinet on his great Bankruptcy Bill, which was to be the prominent measure of the session, he tells Lord Palmerston, as late as the 27th January, that he did not know that any section of the Cabinet had been appointed to consider it. They were not to be favoured with a copy of it till the 3d February; and if they wanted to see the Attorney upon it, they must attend at his chambers on the 5th or 8th. Having received a direction from the Cabinet, who are anxious about their chief measure, to give notice of the bill on the first day of the session, and introduce it a few days later, he objects to the mandatory form of the expression. He points out to Lord Palmerston that his legal reform bills are a laborious duty, self-imposed at great personal sacrifices, and "must not be the subject of peremptory communications." A "satisfactory assurance on this subject" is demanded, as he has other measures in contemplation. In accepting Lord Pal-

merston's conciliatory explanation, he harps upon Mr Gladstone's taunt in the divorce debates, of his being a hewer of wood and drawer of water to the Cabinet, and renews his complaint that the Lord Chancellor and Solicitor-General were of no use to him. As regards the former, he remarked that, "I have begged him to take on his shoulders the Land Transfer Bill and introduce it to the Lords (which ought to be the course), and I have offered to explain it all to him; but 'Jock is too canny,' and so I must do it myself." The fate of the Bankruptcy measure was that Bethell rapidly passed it through the Commons; but Lords Brougham, Cranworth, and Chelmsford fell upon it in the Lords —Lord Campbell single-handed being no match for his opponents. Without going into details, it is sufficient to say that it went back to the Commons mutilated, and, in the opinion of its projector, absolutely useless. Before the Lords' amendments came on for consideration, Lord Campbell died. The Commons disagreed with the amendments. Lord Westbury, as Chancellor, began his career in the House of Lords by placing himself in antagonism to the majority and, as might have been expected, by exhibiting at the very outset all his characteristic powers of disdainful and contemptuous sarcasm, directed against the rival law lords who had incurred his indignation. The tone adopted by him to his rivals in the House was very similar to that of his observation to an unfortunate clerk who had interrupted him during consultation with a slight correction as to a date, "Will you please, sir, to go outside that door and shut it?" As a result of some vehement altercations, some of the amendments were waived, but the rest were insisted upon. Lord Westbury always objected to the Act being called by his name. He said its provisions were inconsistent and unworkable, and that for every hydra-head of abuse destroyed, seven new ones had appeared. Another Bankruptcy Act was passed in 1883, which provided, as Lord Westbury had desired, for official superintendence of bankruptcy business.

But this was an unfortunate commencement for the new Chancellor in the House of Lords. It is due to Lord Westbury's memory to say that there are strong indications that he did not intend his tenure of the woolsack to be an ornamental ending to a prosperous career; he was sincerely anxious to signalise it by great measures of legal improvement. He tried to cheapen and simplify the transfer of land. He was credited with the intention of making a conveyancer's position such that he should not be able to earn his salt. So in 1862 his great measure was a Registration of Title Act. The idea was not merely to register deeds, but to register estates, titles, and transfers; to get rid of what he called "the tyranny of parchment"; to effect a transfer of land as easily as of stock. His bill passed both Houses. He took great credit for it with Lord Palmerston, and got congratulations on his name being associated with all the important law reforms of recent years. But the Act would not work. Landowners did not care for it; it involved trouble and cost, and led to litigation. The solicitors, whom Lord Campbell used to describe as more powerful than either House of Parliament, were hostile to it. It was superseded by Lord Cairns's Act of 1875, which in turn did not work any better.

It would be tedious to recapitulate Lord Westbury's endeavours to improve the law. During his whole tenure of office he devoted himself ungrudgingly to the public service, as might have been expected from a man of his ardent and energetic nature and his undoubtedly high sense of public duty. His comprehensive designs on this subject may be appreciated by reading his celebrated speech in 1863, in introducing a bill for further revising the statute-book. But no Chancellor of recent times, except perhaps Lord Brougham, ever placed himself in such acrimonious antagonism to the House through which he had to pass his measures. He came, of course, into strong personal collision with the late Lord Derby and Bishop Wilberforce. From the former he on one occasion received a stern remonstrance and rebuke. There had been a furious personal encounter between Lord Chelmsford and the Chancellor, in which the latter had observed no moderation whatever in the language which he permitted himself to use. The House was crowded for a scene, and Lord Derby roused himself to vindicate the outraged sense of the House in a way which recalled his mode of resenting O'Connell's outbursts in the House of Commons. The interference had its effect. The unrestrained animosity of these legal encounters abated, and the Chancellor soon found himself at war with the Bishops. Dr Wilberforce was no unequal antagonist, but soon found himself provoked and exasperated by the supercilious disdain with which he was treated. The first encounter apparently was over a bill which the Bishop had prepared for constituting bishoprics abroad without the licence of the Crown. The bill had to be withdrawn in consequence of the Chancellor's effective criticisms — not without some explosions of wrath from the Bishop. His general attitude towards the Bench of Bishops may be inferred from the sayings attributed to him,—one, that on the woolsack he might have fancied himself presiding in Paradise but for the excessive display of lawn sleeves, which at once dispelled the pleasing illusion; the other, when objecting to a Bishops Resignation Bill, "The law in its infinite wisdom has already provided for the not improbable event of the imbecility of a bishop."

Party spirit ran very high on Church matters during Lord Westbury's Chancellorship, and he was not exactly the man to pour oil on the troubled waters. It fell to Lord Westbury to pronounce the judgment of the Judicial Committee in the case of 'Essays and Reviews,' in which, without pronouncing any opinion as to the character, effect, or tendency of the book, it was held that the passages impugned had not been proved with the strictness required in quasi-criminal proceedings to contravene the teachings of the Church. Of course Lord Westbury was merely the mouthpiece of this judgment, for which the whole Committee were responsible; but it was denounced as "an awful and profane judgment." The tribunal was vituperated as a "masterpiece of Satan for the overthrow of the faith." Convocation, under the influence of the Bishop of Oxford, condemned the whole book as heretical, by a resolution in the nature of a synodical judgment. This proceeding was, of course, a distinct challenge to the Lord Chancellor, who, nothing loth, at once entered into the fray, with the result that the

House of Lords became the arena of another memorable encounter.

Lord Houghton brought the subject before the House of Lords, by asking of the Chancellor a series of questions as to the power of Convocation to pass a synodical judgment, and as to the immunity of its members from legal proceedings consequent thereon. Lord Westbury's reply is as good a specimen of his caustic wit as can be found, utterly reckless of the animosities which he excited, full of expressions which, as the Bishop said of them, blistered those on whom they fell. He began by a contemptuous reference to Convocation, with which there were, he said, three modes of dealing. "First, while they are harmlessly busy, to take no notice of their proceedings; second, when they seem likely to get into mischief, to prorogue them and put a stop to their proceedings; third, when they have done something clearly beyond their powers, to bring them to the bar of justice for punishment." Then he went on to describe the pains and penalties of a præmunire, which, he said, they had incurred by violating the Act of Supremacy, which prohibited a synodical sentence without the consent of the sovereign. He drew a picture of the primate and bishops in sackcloth and ashes at the bar of the House—the deacons, archdeacons, canons, and vicars—condemned to a sequestration of their revenues, "all included in one common crime, all subject to one common penalty." He took credit for having refrained from instituting a prosecution, "in view of the impotency" of the course which had been taken. For, said he, "I am happy to tell your lordships that what is called a synodical judgment is a well-lubricated set of words—a sentence so oily and saponaceous that no one can grasp it. Like an eel its slips through your fingers." Having demonstrated that the judgment was a *ridiculus mus*, a sentence without any meaning, he proceeded to deal with those members of Convocation who had dissented from the synodical judgment and had protested against it. One would have thought that common prudence would have dictated to the orator conciliation at all events in this direction; but the Chancellor was in the full swing of his wit, and friends as well as foes must come under the lash. The protesting parties might think they had saved themselves from consequences. But, he said, if they will take my recommendation, "their best security after protesting will be to gather up their garments and flee, and remembering the pillar of salt, not to cast a look behind." It must no doubt have been very amusing, but the speech scattered rancour all round. The Bishop was loudly applauded as he inveighed against it, and he represented a large and devoted party, who felt themselves as much blistered by what had passed as the Bishop himself.

In spite of the growing personal hostility by which he was surrounded, the Chancellor proposed to utilise the session of 1865 by carrying six measures of law reform. In fact, he went at such a pace that he distanced all previous competitors. Even Lord Brougham complained of it, and wished for a breathing space. He did not live to fuse legal and equitable jurisdiction, but he at least carried the measure which concentrated all the courts, both of law and equity, within one building.

At the end of this session of 1865 Lord Westbury fell. Certain scandals had occurred which

it is unnecessary to dwell upon, but with which Lord Westbury's name was mixed up. He was in the position of an accused man, and wished to resign, but Lord Palmerston prevented him. A committee of investigation into what was called the Edmunds case was appointed, which acquitted him of improper motives, but attributed to him error of judgment and a wrong view of his duty. Unfortunately, another case of the same kind (that of an official being allowed by the Chancellor, after detection of irregularities, to resign with a pension) happened at Leeds. Another committee inquired. Again it reported that no improper motives were to be attributed, but that the pension had been granted hastily and without due examination. Again the Lord Chancellor was prevented by the Government from resigning. Under our system of government, the inevitable result was a motion of censure by the Opposition. Again no personal corruption was imputed, but laxity of practice and want of caution were. The motion was carried, and Lord Westbury resigned. His dignified speech on that occasion did much to stem the tide of reprobation which had set in. Mr Gladstone, in later years, thought he had suffered heavily, and beyond what was quite reasonable. His memory stands clear of the imputation of personal corruption, and the immense labours of his official career may fairly explain laxity of attention to particular instances of official misconduct. The duty of dealing with such cases may possibly, perhaps necessarily, be delegated; but the responsibility remains. It was right that Lord Westbury should be driven from office; but under all the circumstances of his great career, it was hard upon him. Yet there was a certain appropriateness in the man who had so needlessly and so often exasperated personal animosity, falling at last before a host of assailants to whom he had incautiously given their opportunity, and who in the end conducted him to the door of his office, and practically bade him go outside and shut it. Public feeling soon experienced a change, and much sympathy was privately expressed. Throughout his career, notwithstanding the asperity with which he conducted all contests, both forensic and political, he was not deficient in kindly feelings. It was a desire not to press with too great severity on fallen and disgraced men which led to his ruin. The remainder of his life was of no great interest. He never again rejoined a Ministry, and apparently was never invited. He twice refused a Lord-Justiceship, which Mr Gladstone, in a circuitous way, pressed upon his notice. In judicial life he confined his attention to the House of Lords and Privy Council tribunals, except that he undertook the office of arbitrator to wind up a great amalgamated insurance company under a special Act of Parliament.

As regards politics, he entertained grave objections to any scheme of disestablishing the Irish Church which involved an interference with the Royal supremacy. Otherwise he might probably have been Lord Chancellor in Mr Gladstone's Cabinet of 1868; but neither he nor Sir R. Palmer would have anything to do with the new Irish policy. Here is his own account:—

"I made no secret last year to Granville and others that my mind did not run with total confiscation of Church property, or with the total destruction of Episcopacy or the supremacy of the Crown. Therefore I

neither have had, nor expected to have, any communication from my former party. Who would have believed ten years ago that Gladstone and the High Churchman Wood [Lord Hatherly] were the fated instruments to destroy the Irish Church?"

He occasionally, however, took part in the debates of the House of Lords, and notably on those concerning the Irish Church. But he never again displayed the old asperity or the keenness for an encounter which marked the more active period of his career. In fact, he collapsed in physical vigour with great rapidity. The cessation from active life and the habits resulting from increased leisure were not favourable to longevity. He died in June 1873, within a few hours of his old antagonist Bishop Wilberforce, the two heroes in their generation of the legal and ecclesiastical professions, totally dissimilar in the character of their intellect and pursuits, but alike in their strenuous, ardent, and unyielding temperament. The Bishop possessed to the full those qualities which Lord Westbury lacked, that power of inspiring enthusiasm and touching large bodies of men with personal devotion to himself. Lord Westbury stood alone, confident in his powers, and revelled in exciting opposition and animosity from sheer love of displaying his power of quelling them. But when we compare the biographies of the two men by such light as has been thrown upon their inner lives and characters, the lawyer stands quite as high or higher than the divine in devotion to public duty, and in the sacrifices which he willingly made to it. In independence of character the lawyer stands the higher, for throughout Lord Westbury's life there is no record of his intriguing for promotion or repining at failure. He worked hard, and achieved his successes, every one of them, "off his own bat." He sought and accepted promotion defiantly; he held the highest office in the realm with majesty and eloquence; and notwithstanding the incidents of his fall, retired from it with dignity. His career, no doubt, is tarnished by many faults, but they were not of a character which impaired either his willingness or capacity to render great services to the State.

NOTES FROM THE CONGO

I.

It is somewhat amusing, in reading Stanley's works, to contrast the ideas of Africa to be gathered thence, with the popular notion of that continent, as a vast steaming swamp, full of fevers, venomous reptiles, and nameless horrors of all kinds. This applies chiefly to his latest work — for, in truth, much of 'Through the Dark Continent' is melancholy reading enough, though even there the uplands of Manyema and the glorious cultivated plains of Uganda and Unyoro come in for their full share of praise. If we may believe the great explorer, Africa is, if not a paradise, at least quite a tolerable place to live in; and it is only the folly and ignorance of white men in general, and new-comers in particular, that cause all the death and disease of which one hears so much in Europe.

The truth is, one must remember that Stanley has spent the best years of his life in Africa, that to it he owes his name and fame as an explorer, and for its sake has undergone hardships and dangers innumerable; and that, in consequence, the "Sphinx of the Nations," one might almost say, is to him as a child.

But even allowing for Stanley's prepossessions in favour of Africa, one must admit that there is less now than there was ten years ago to deter Europeans from going to live there. The climate, certainly, is more injurious to them than that of their own country, but not in reality more fatal than that of India or China. All tropical countries are enervating to Europeans; and a man who comes to the Congo must not shut his eyes to the fact that he *is* in a tropical climate, or try to live as he used to do in Europe. He must remember that the sun is much more powerful, and that, after being for some months exposed to it, he is less able to resist the sudden changes of temperature to which he is sure to be subjected. As Stanley says, people think a great deal too much about malaria, and not enough about other causes of fever. When I first announced to my friends that I was going to the Congo, 'malaria" was dinned into my ears from morning till night, though no one seemed able to tell me precisely what it was — one man, indeed, saying he believed it was a kind of fever. During the first two years of my stay in the country, I had several slight fevers and one or two bad ones, but not one of these can I attribute to malaria. The first attack was the worst. I was on my way from Matadi to Léopoldville, and quite disposed to look on Africa as favourably as one could wish, when one day I felt rather queer, and found I could walk no further. For the next eight or ten days my opinion of Africa went down to zero. Had Stanley been writing a prophecy concerning my arrival at the Pool, he could not have described it more exactly than when he says—speaking of Europeans on their way up country:—

"Some of them, under the fiery impulses of getting on, on, and on, will march their fifteen miles per day, and, on arriving at the

Pool at the end of their journey, they will turn round and deliberately curse the land, the climate, and the people."[1]

I started with a great notion of getting on, and walked, if not fifteen miles per day, at any rate more than I should have done, after lolling for six weeks about the decks of an ocean steamer. On arriving at the Pool, carried in a hammock, my head spinning like a top, and with just enough sense about me to know that I was still alive, I did curse the country and the climate most heartily, and vowed that, if I ever regained strength enough to bear the journey down to the sea, I would get out of Africa as quickly as I could. Having made my entry into Léopoldville in this fashion, I was placed under the care of Dr Mense—and a kinder or better doctor never existed. His greatest pleasure was to minister to the sick—not only by prescribing medicines, but by devising every possible comfort and even luxury for the benefit of his patients; indeed, he never seemed happy unless he was doing good to some one. A man would need to be very far gone if he did not soon begin to revive under Dr Mense's treatment; and accordingly, I was soon able to crawl out of my room and look round.

I was puzzled about the fever, which I could not attribute to chills, as I had been warned at Matadi not to stand about in damp clothes after the day's march, and had, in consequence, been careful always to put on an extra coat as soon as we halted. As for malaria, I had been up among the mountains, between one and two thousand feet above the sea, and had always understood that malaria never rises to such a height. Dr Mense informed me, however, that my fever was the result of exposure to the sun. A long day's march under a tropical sun is, it seems—if it does not first result in sunstroke—as fruitful a source of fever as any other. As the day was clear, he further advised me to try a walk to the top of Léopold Hill and have a look at the Pool. I crawled up, wondering if I should ever be strong enough to cross the hundreds of hills that lay between me and the sea, and reckoning how long it would take me to reach England. Arriving at last at the top, I turned round, and my first exclamation was, "Going back, be-hanged! I must get better and see the end of this!" Before me lay one of the noblest views I had ever seen. I could never do justice to it in a description were I to try for a year; and even standing on the hill with it before my eyes, I felt as if I could not see enough of it. Below me lay Léopoldville and the native town of Ntamo — I could look right over them to the baobabs marking the site of Nshassa[2]—and beyond, the broad Pool with its sandbanks and islands; while, to the north-east, the whitish gleam of Dover Cliffs showed plainly above the dark forest of Bamu (or Long Island); and a little to the east, a gap in the hills indicated where the Congo poured its volume of waters into the Pool. Turning to the south-east, the eye is arrested by Mabengu, lately christened Mense Mountain, in honour of Dr Mense, who ascended

[1] Stanley, 'The Congo,' vol. ii. p. 216.

[2] Or Kinchassa—the native prefix introduces much confusion into proper names.

it just before leaving for Europe —which he did, March 13, 1887, to the great regret of every European on the Congo. On the south side of the Pool a broad grass-covered plain extends from Nshassa to Kimpoko, and back inland as far as the mountain-ridge of which Mabengu forms part. This plain, consisting of a rich black soil, will, I hope, in the dim future—when the long-talked-of railway is completed—be covered with plantations of coffee, rice, and sugar-cane. Some portions of it are inundated by the river during a rainy season of unusual severity; but the greater part is high and dry at all times, and only wants the grass cleared away to be ready for cultivation. To the west the mighty Congo sweeps round the foot of Léopold Hill, and over the reef which forms the first rapid of Ntamo cataract. In the middle of the cataract are two or three rocky, tree-covered islets, between which the river roars in one white mass of boiling foam. Just above the islands is seen one of the mouths of the Gordon-Bennett river, which, emerging from the dark forests of the north bank, flings itself headlong over a lofty cliff into the Congo. Eastward of the Gordon-Bennett, the high wooded bank extends to the village of Mfwa. Here, on a commanding height, the French tricolor waves from the station of Brazzaville, right opposite the rocky promontory now called Kallina Point, after an Austrian lieutenant who, in 1883, lost his life while attempting to round it in a canoe.[1] This point stands boldly out into the stream—its cliffs rising perpendicularly out of deep water — and diverts the strong current, which dashes against its upper side, towards the centre of the river,—forming under the lee of the cliffs a return current of almost equal strength. A newcomer ascending the river in a canoe, and keeping, as is always done, close inshore, would not see the broken water beyond the point till his craft was well under the influence of the return current, which would carry it, at a speed of three or four miles an hour, right into an opposing current running at the rate of six or seven. The sudden shock and lurch which follow are almost certain to upset the canoe; and then the best swimmer would need more than human strength to keep his head above the chaos of cross-currents and whirlpools, which sweeps him away towards Ntamo falls. I remember making a rash attempt—during my school-days—at diving through the sluice of one of the locks on the Medway. The river, not above twenty yards wide at the spot, was running through a sluice of about two feet six by five into a basin —say twelve feet broad and ten deep. Diving too low, I was caught in the return current, and whirled head over heels over and over several times, before I could struggle into calmer water, with a force such as I never wish to feel again. Compared with this trifling instance, what must be the force of current of a river which, after a course of nearly 3000 miles, throws on an average nearly 2,000,000 cubic feet of water out of the Pool, through a channel from one and a half to two miles wide, below which a sudden fall of ground forms the cataract of Ntamo? It is true that canoes can and do go up and down

[1] The Congo, vol. i. p. 486.

round Kallina Point, manned by experienced native boatmen; but even these are often thrown back several times before they contrive to cross the stream into the calmer bay beyond. Many a time, when rounding the point in the State steamer, have I seen the water thrown up into a great wave, higher than our gunwale, on either side of her bows, as the plucky little launch charged the current,—and wondered how any canoe could possibly live in that stream.

Having taken a good look round from the top of Léopold Hill, I descended to the beach where the steamers *Stanley* and *A.I.A.*[1] were lying in the quiet baylet, and the *En Avant* out of water undergoing repairs. Here I found several engineers and captains discussing the possibility of supplying, with the limited means at their command, an essential part of the *Stanley's* gear, which had not arrived with the rest, and the want of which was now delaying the expedition destined to start for Bangala and the Falls. One of this group, on seeing me approach, left the rest, and, coming towards me, announced himself as Captain Anderson of the *Stanley*, and then introduced me to the other gentlemen present. Captain Anderson is a Swede; and what I saw of him then, and have since seen of his countrymen, inclines me to think that I have missed one of the good things of life through not visiting Sweden in the course of my travels. Till I started for the Congo I had never come in contact with Swedes; but on board the Portuguese mail-steamer I had two fellow-passengers of that nationality, and better company I could not have wished on the long voyage to Banana.

I have described in a former paper (see 'Blackwood's Magazine' for October 1887) my journey to Bangala, and the subsequent events—especially the loss of Stanley Falls Station, which, as will now be seen, threw a great deal of work on us, and kept our little steamer in constant employment. When the Arabs attacked the station, the garrison consisted of about forty Accra men and forty Bangalas, besides a number of women and boys—freed slaves ransomed from the Arabs. Of these, eleven Haoussas, several women, and the whole of the Bangalas, came down to Iboko in canoes. Four more Haoussas and four boys were found with Mr Deane, when Captain Coquilhat rescued him after the fall of the station. This left some twenty-five Haoussas, and a number of women, whose fate was unknown, as Captain Coquilhat failed for the time being to trace them; and the only conclusion we could arrive at was, that they were either dead, or prisoners in the hands of the tribes of Langa-Langa,[2] whom the Bangalas had been fighting on their way down to Iboko. On my return from Léopoldville, after Captain Coquilhat had gone home on sick leave, I heard that they were all being detained as prisoners by the people of Upoto—a large native town some six days' steaming above Bangala. Accordingly, about the middle of March 1887, Lieutenant Van Kerckhoven, of the Belgian army, who had arrived at Bangala as Captain Coquilhat's successor in the preceding January, started in the *A.I.A.* to try and liberate them.

[1] *Association Internationale Africaine.*

[2] This name is given by the Bangalas to the country and natives between Upoto and the Falls.

The little steamer was loaded up with brass wire, beads, cowries, cloth, empty bottles, and all the other innumerable articles that pass for money in this part of the world,—and off we went. The second day brought us to Ikolungu, a large settlement on the north bank, about four hours' steam above the mouth of the Ngala[1] river. This town stands on a stiff clay bank, and is surrounded by a splendid forest, containing trees from 80 to 100 feet high. When I first saw it—on my voyage up to the Falls with Captain Coquilhat—it was at war with Bangala, and was one of the best defended native towns I have seen on the Congo. Along the river-bank, and round the land-side of the town, were palisades, three or four deep, formed of poles twelve feet long and two or three inches thick, driven into the ground about nine inches apart, and fastened together by a horizontal stick lashed along, eight feet above the ground. Inside them, at a distance of ten yards, was another set, three deep, and inside that a third set; so that the place—belonging, as it did, to a powerful tribe—was able to stand a long siege. The defences on the river-bank, however, have now disappeared, and those on the land-side are in a state of decay; for the palm-tree has been cut—the native ceremony on concluding peace—between the Wabika and the Bangala, and Dua, chief of Ikolungu, comes down unmolested to Iboko to sell his ivory to the Mundélé.[2] All this has been brought about by the Free State; for when the chief of Ikolungu became the blood-brother of the Mundélé at Bangala, he asked for help to fight the Bangalas, while the Bangala chief preferred the same request. To all which Captain Coquilhat replied—"Mata Bwyki is my brother; Dua is my brother. If Mata Bwyki and Dua want to fight, I will go into my house and go to sleep till it is all over." So, after a long palaver, the palm-tree was cut, and the war was at an end. The strong current sweeping round the bend of the river at Ikolungu has cut into the bank and carried away the palisades, and they have not been renewed; while Dua has launched his trading canoes, for peaceable traffic with his old enemies. After his last visit I had the pleasure (!) of towing him, his wives and slaves, up alongside the *A.I.A.* The poor little steamer had two other large canoes and a whaleboat to tow as well; but though I growled at the extra strain on the engines, which rendered them more liable to break down, the amusement I had in watching his highness soon dispelled my annoyance; and I cannot help regretting that Stanley did not—so far as I can discover—make his acquaintance, as we have thereby lost a graphic and amusing description. Whenever King Dua took a drink of palm-wine, or ate his meals, one of his wives produced a hard brown nut, about the size of an egg, with one end cut off, and the inside hollowed out. This nut (which I have not succeeded in identifying) he slowly placed on the great toe of his left foot. This done, the palm-wine or food was placed before him, and a slave-boy came and stood behind him with a hand-bell. Every time he took a mouthful of food, or a drink of *massanga*[3] or palm-wine, he rapped the bottom of the canoe with the

[1] Or Mongalla.

[2] "White man."

[3] Fermented sugar-cane juice.

nut on his great toe, while a tinkle on the bell announced to all whom it might concern that Dua of Ikolungu was eating, or drinking, as the case might be. He went through the same ceremony when smoking, taking a long pull at his pipe for every rap of his toe and tinkle on the bell. I had watched this for some time with great amusement, when the king, observing me, offered me a cup of *massanga*, which I accepted; and, not to be behind him in ceremony, before drinking it, turned round and gave some instructions to my fireman. Hardly had I raised the cup to my lips, when a series of short, sharp blasts on the steam-whistle of the *A.I.A.* nearly made Dua jump out of his canoe; while I, between laughing and drinking, was fairly choked.

After leaving Ikolungu there is a long stretch of low country which, during several months of the year, is either covered with water or so swampy that no natives have ventured to establish themselves there. It takes three days, or perhaps a little longer, to steam past this swamp. Stanley has a great deal to tell about the beauties of this region, but I must say I was always glad to leave it behind. However, a tree covered with orchilla weed is indeed a beautiful sight; and a whole forest of trees, with this fleecy, light-green drapery swaying about in the wind, is worth going miles to see. It generally grows on gum-copal trees, and I have myself seen the forest of these trees covered with orchilla weed described by Stanley.[1] There is also a creeper which winds itself round the trunks of trees like a huge serpent, and having climbed to the branches and spread over them, drops down numberless ropes, which seem to take root in the ground. The main stem is often four, five, or six inches in diameter, and the hangers from half an inch upwards. If you cut one of these stems clean across with a knife, a white milky sap is seen to exude between the bark and the woody centre — this is india-rubber or caoutchouc.

Besides these three articles, which will some day help to pay the dividends of the Congo railway, there are thousands of trees whose beautifully-grained timber has only to be brought to Europe to find a ready sale. I have cut up dead rosewood-trees for firewood, out of the trunk of which a log two feet in diameter, and from twenty to thirty feet long, of splendid grain, could have been obtained, after the outer casing of white wood had been cut away; while teak, kingwood, camwood, lignum-vitæ, and African black oak, are only a few out of the valuable woods I have found rotting in the forest, and cut up to feed the insatiable little furnace of the *A.I.A.* But in spite of the beauty and wealth of this part of the Congo, there seems something depressing in being constantly shut in between two high forest walls; and I always feel a sort of relief on coming down to the wide open channels about Bolobo, and running through the park-like scenery of the Congo between that village and the Pool, where it rolls in a single majestic stream through the glorious hilly country of the Bayanzi and Batéké.

After the swamp — continuing our upward voyage — comes the village of Mpeza, also on the north bank, whence the ground gradually rises, till, at Upoto, ten miles

[1] 'The Congo,' vol. ii. p. 87.

higher, it ends in a spur of hills which, running out into the river, forms a reef of rock, extending to Rubunga on the south bank, over which the Congo rolls in a kind of mild rapid, quite passable for steamers of light draught, except in one or two channels between the islands near the south bank. It is, however, a dangerous place at low water, the rocks being then only two or three feet below the surface, so that the sounding-pole and lead-line are kept in constant requisition. Mpeza is the first town of the Langa-Langa, and its chief would, by himself, make the fortune of a travelling show. His name is Ibanza—*Anglice*, the devil; and truly were I asked to depict his satanic majesty, I think I could not do so more accurately than by a sketch of this chief. His face is one mass of small fleshy lumps raised by some process known only to the natives, — rows of these lumps adorning his forehead, cheeks, nose, and chin,—while his hair and beard are made up into a clotted mass with palm-oil. On his head is a leopard-skin hat, in front whereof is fastened a tin plate presented to him by M. Van Kerckhoven. As this is kept brightly polished, it is well to keep out of its range while interviewing his majesty on a sunny day, in order to avoid the risk of sudden blindness from the dazzling reflection as he nods his head, and, extending his elbows, waves them up and down as if about to fly, at the same time ejaculating *way! way! way! way!*—his form of salutation—after which he claps his hands together, and clasping one over the other, gives a most unearthly grin. Mpeza is one of the dirtiest and most untidy-looking villages on the whole Congo, and were it more civilised, would soon be decimated by disease. But the heaps of dirt and refuse lying about will be swept by the next storm into the Congo—which must, in fact, act as the great sewer of Central Africa—and in this way, I believe, disease is averted. For to the terrible storms and great waterways of the African continent may be attributed, the comparative immunity from infectious diseases, and the absence of epidemics among the aboriginal tribes inhabiting the interior at a distance from civilised communities. The epidemics which have from time to time raged through India and the East seem to be unknown in regions whither neither Christians nor Mohammedans have penetrated. Smallpox I have heard of as brought from Zanzibar by the Arabs to some place or places east of Stanley Falls;[1] but neither smallpox nor cholera is known among the natives west of the Falls. Barbadoes leg, elephantiasis, ulcers, and sores comprise about all the diseases that have come under my observation. That there are others I do not doubt, but not of an epidemic character. When one considers the general indifference of the natives as regards sanitary conditions, one sometimes wonders that the population of whole villages is not carried off by some terrible pestilence; and the absence of such a scourge I believe to be due partly to the heavy rains and vast rivers, which carry off the refuse, and partly to the ants and other insects, and the carrion-eating birds. Nature, when left alone, does her own scavengering; but as civilisation advances, the works of man often interfere with the natural drainage, without providing any sub-

[1] See 'Through the Dark Continent,' vol. ii. p. 62 *sqq.*

stitute; and it is only when the population has been decimated by disease that men's eyes are opened.

Above Mpeza is another large settlement called Bokélé, extending some two miles along the river-bank; and above that, nestling on the lower slope of the range of hills, is Bokuti, where we stopped, and M. Van Kerckhoven succeeded in buying back three or four women and one Haoussa. Finding the natives unwilling to sell the rest, he decided to go on and try again on our return; so we steamed off round the point to Upoto, which occupies a commanding position on the eastern slope of the hills, with a view right across to Rubunga on the south bank. Having steamed to the upper end of the village, we stopped the engines, and the interpreter, Samba, standing up in the bows, shouted aloud, for the benefit of all whom it might concern, the why and wherefore of our coming. We then anchored off a sandbank, and awaited the commencement of the palaver. Presently several canoes approached us, and M. Van Kerckhoven having landed on the bank, the ceremony of blood-brotherhood was gone through, and business began. After one or two of our men had been bought back for an amount of brass wire, cloth, beads, &c., of a value equivalent to between £3 and £4 sterling, and the price had been fixed within certain limits, matters began to progress more rapidly. After we had ransomed three or four, we heard from them that eleven of their number had been killed by the natives, and six or seven sold away to other tribes. One of these last was already in Bangala, having been bought back from Bukumbi, a village on the south bank nearly opposite Ikolungu. By nightfall we had bought back five Haoussas and sixteen women—among them the woman who had fled from the Arabs and taken refuge in Stanley Falls Station. Mr Deane's answer to the Arabs who came to demand her—"As an Englishman I will not, and as an officer of the State I cannot, give her up," resulted, as is elsewhere related, in the loss of the station.

Next morning, as the Upoto people did not seem inclined to part with the rest of their captives, we returned to Bokuti, where, after some trouble — due to one of the chiefs, who declared that he would fight, but would sell no more of his slaves — M. Van Kerckhoven succeeded in getting three more women and one Haoussa. As these twenty-five people, in addition to our crew and armed force of thirty men, completely filled up the little steamer and the whaleboat, we headed at once for Bangala, where we arrived in four days. This was in March 1887, and the *A.I.A.* was for some time after employed on other business, in an entirely different direction. On the 3d of June, with Lieutenants Van Kerckhoven and Dhanis on board, she again reached Upoto; but as we approached the shore, the natives ran down with shields and spears, and would on no account hold any palaver with us, but insisted on fighting. We steamed down to Bakuti, and finding that there too the natives were hostile, passed on to Bokélé. When we were about half-way past this latter place, Samba drew M. Van Kerckhoven's attention to several large war-canoes, fully manned and armed, crossing the channel just in front of us, while two or three more were lying half concealed under the bushes on the island. Suddenly the report of a flintlock musket rang out, and a shower of

slugs across our bows indicated only too plainly that the natives intended to capture a few more State soldiers, in order to sell them again to the Mundélé. Two more huge war-canoes emerging from a small creek behind us, showed that they had well thought out the affair beforehand, and now reckoned on having caught us in a trap. However, we had no intention of sitting at their tables, as Charles Lamb has it, "not as guests, but as meat." Out came our Martinis and Winchesters; the men were furnished with cartridges for their Sniders and chassepots, and slowing down for a few minutes, we let them have right and left, before and behind; and then, putting on full steam, charged straight for the two canoes ahead of us. As we approached, we exchanged our long-range Martinis for the quick-firing Winchesters, and the mighty men of Langa-Langa were soon glad to dive into the river to escape the deadly hail of the repeating-rifles. The whole river-front of the village was lined with savages, in their war-paint and feathers, popping away at us with flintlock muskets, and brandishing spears and knives; while the occasional sharp crack of a rifle showed that they were still in possession of the Sniders and a few of the cartridges taken from the captured Haoussas. Their ignorance of the power of our rifles was evident, from the way in which they held up their shields of plaited cane whenever they noticed a gun pointed at them. I saw more than one poor wretch put up his shield, only just in time to receive a ball right through it and himself as well, and come rolling down the clay bank into the river, dead as a door nail. We contrived to run the gauntlet and come out scot-free; but as we had only about thirty men with us, while Bokélé could muster some thousands, M. Van Kerckhoven decided to put a good distance between us as quickly as possible. Accordingly, we ran down-stream by the light of the moon, which was in her first quarter, and gave a fairish light till towards morning, when clouds obscured the sky, and we lost our way, and ran on a sandbank. Failing to get off, we anchored where we were; but as soon as the first streaks of dawn showed in the sky, we roused the men, and in half an hour were once more afloat. Having stopped at 8 A.M. to cut fuel, which took us some two hours, we proceeded, and finally, about 7 P.M. reached a good camp, where we prepared to spend the night.

Before continuing my narrative, I will state the reasons which induced M. Van Kerckhoven to try to ransom the Haoussas. It may be said that such a course would obviously lead—as in fact it did—to attempts on the part of the natives to capture more of the Free State employees in order to sell them again. At first sight the proper course would seem to be, to go up with a strong force to retake them, and punish the offenders. Had this been done (and I believe there was at one time some talk of it), the natives, who are almost as cunning as the Indians of North America, would have heard of the expedition long before it reached their country, and hidden their prisoners away far inland; while the relieving force could have done no more than burn their towns and kill a few dozen savages, with the satisfaction of knowing that, when all was over, the men they had come to save would be beheaded to furnish funeral baked-meats in honour of the Langa-Langa slain in the fight. M. Van Kerckhoven knew the native character

too well to be unaware of this, and resolved accordingly to remove the men first, if possible, and leave the question of retribution alone for the present. Eleven men had already been beheaded before our first expedition — some of them, perhaps, for trying to escape, others for no earthly reason, unless it might be said that their masters killed them for the fun of the thing—for this is the only way in which I can account for the wanton murder of so many slaves by these savages.

In spite of the munificence of King Léopold in founding the Free State—in spite of all that has been, and is being, done to stop the slave-trade — human beings are almost daily killed like so much vermin within a few miles of Bangala Station. I had often, when passing the villages just above Bangala, noticed groups of poles standing out of water, to the top of which a piece of cloth was tied. I paid no great attention to them, taking them for fetishes of some kind; but one day, happening to ask M. Van Kerckhoven what they were, I was informed that they were placed to mark the spot where the corpses of decapitated slaves had been thrown into the river. It seems that, at a place called Lusengo, whenever the natives have a great *massanga*-drinking, they cut off the heads of one or more slaves, and throwing the bodies into the river, set up a pole to mark the place, to the top of which is tied the dead man's loin-cloth. I do not know whether the pole is driven through the body of the victim, but imagine that it is, as, during the whole time I have been at Bangala, I have not seen above four dead bodies floating down the river; while above Lusengo I have counted thirty of these poles in less than a mile of river-frontage. I tried to find out from the natives the reason for this slaughter, but never succeeded. They do not deny that they kill their slaves in this fashion, but distinctly repudiate the notion of eating any part of them; yet, for my part, I am inclined to believe that cannibal feasts occur now and then.

The authority of the State has so far prevailed that this sort of thing does not, as a rule, take place in Iboko; but noisy drinking-bouts, which too often end fatally, are far from uncommon. The usual procedure is this: two or three large pots of *massanga* are brought and set down on the ground, and the company gather round them. When they reach the excited stage of intoxication, sticks and knives are produced — the latter, of native manufacture, are very long and sharp—and the play begins. Two men stand opposite one another, each holding a knife in his right hand and a stick in his left, and slashing at the stick held by his opponent till he has succeeded in cutting it through. It may be imagined that, as some very hard hitting is indulged in, and the various couples engaged in the game stand crowded together in a very small space, it is not the sticks alone which suffer; and the wonder is that so few serious accidents take place. One evening I happened to be in the village during one of these performances, and saw two men, wrought up to frenzy with *massanga* and excitement, fighting with their knives in good earnest. I expected every moment to see them lose their heads, not only figuratively but literally, and, seizing a heavy bludgeon from the nearest spectator, prepared to join in the fray, thinking that a good blow across the wrist would make both combatants drop their weapons. However, before I could

get near enough to interfere, up rushed a native girl, who, seizing one of these doughty champions in her arms, slung him across her shoulder, as if he had been a baby, and ran away with him. Though so ignominiously borne off, with his head and arms suspended in air, he still brandished his knife, and yelled Bangala curses at his adversary, who was so overcome by astonishment that he staggered backwards, and sat down in a *massanga*-pot, thus wasting the staple of the evening's entertainment, and being forced to run for his life to escape the wrath of the disappointed drinkers. It was a plucky feat for a Bangala woman,—they usually run away as soon as the knives make their appearance. Had that dusky ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν, old King Mata Bwyki, "Lord of Many Guns," been alive, he would have laid about among these brawlers with his royal barge-pole, and quickly secured peace and quiet.

To return to the starting-point of this digression. We had hardly been encamped an hour, and I was just going to sleep, when a large canoe came alongside. It had on board Lusengi, chief of Mobeka (a town on the Ngala river), who was out among the islands of the Congo in search of a large tree, of which to make a war-canoe. He told us that an expedition of eight steamers had, four days before, passed up to the Falls by way of the south bank. I have already mentioned that this part of the river is choked with islands; and just at the spot where we were anchored, there is one over fifty miles long, in the middle of the stream, so that boats may easily miss each other by passing on different sides. As there were not at that time eight steamers afloat on the Upper Congo, we allowed for native exaggeration; and concluding that an expedition of perhaps three or four steamers and two whaleboats had been fitted out to recapture the Falls, M. Van Kerckhoven gave orders to start at once, and reach Bangala as quickly as possible, to hear what orders had arrived for the *A.I.A.* We were off before 9 P.M., rushing downstream at the rate of eight miles an hour through the dark night—the moon, hidden by heavy clouds, just giving light enough to impart a dull grey gleam to the water. M. Dhanis took his place in the bows with a Bangala, who, having been up and down with us several times, was supposed to know the road well. He did not fail to keep up his reputation. How he could tell one channel from another, with nothing to guide him but the two dark walls of forest, and the glimmer of grey water between them, I do not know; but only once, during the whole night, did the sounding-pole touch sand, and by nine next morning we had reached Bangala, only to find that all our efforts had been for nothing, and that what we had passed was Stanley's expedition for the relief of Emin Pasha.

Stanley on the Congo! I exclaimed. Why, I thought he was in America! And who under the canopy was Emin Pasha? and what did he want relieving for? While as for Tippoo Tip, who, it seemed, was going up as the new Governor of the Falls, I had indeed heard of him before, but only as one of the marauding Arabs whom we were so anxious to expel from the territory of the State. It must be remembered that for about four months I had received no news from the civilised world in any shape or form, and the whole was naturally a complete puzzle to me. At length, when all

was made fast—it being Sunday—I went to the chief's room to receive my mail, and, having shouldered the sack which was handed me as my own share, sought the solitude of my own room, where I opened my letters and papers and looked up Emin Pasha—only to be maddened by finding that, while I was running down the right bank, several friends of mine had passed me on the left! These were men who had been on the Congo when I first came out, and had gone home when they had finished their time, afterwards returning to Africa with Stanley's expedition. Not a whisper of this last had reached us; and Stanley himself was the first to announce, by his appearance on the scene, that he had returned to the Congo.

After this the *A.I.A.* was kept pretty busy in the immediate neighbourhood of Bangala till the end of the month; but in July, in company with the *Henry Reed* (chartered from the Livingstone Inland Mission), she ascended the Itimbiri, or Loika—a tributary running into the Congo between Yambinga and Yalulima. I am not sure of the precise object of this exploration; but I believe the intention was to found a station on the upper river, so as to gain access to the north-eastern portion of the Congo Free State. However, the country proved altogether unsuitable for the purpose.

We did not entirely lose our labour, as on the way up we stopped at Upoto, and the natives—whether impressed by the lesson they had received when they tried to fight us, or overawed by the sight of the steamers and men of the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition—were this time more peaceably inclined. We ransomed one more Haoussa and three women; and the chief of Upoto, coming on board the *A.I.A.* to beg for a present from his blood-brother, M. Van Kerckhoven (whom he had tried to kill only a month ago), was seized and held as security for the rest. It was then believed that there were only three more women in the hands of the Langa-Langa; and as these three were not forthcoming within a given time, the chief accompanied us up the Itimbiri, to be restored to his people on our return on condition of their surrendering the women. But on our return, when only two days from Upoto, the chief escaped through the carelessness of the Haoussas, who had him in charge. I was at this time on board the *Henry Reed*; and as she returned to Bangala along the south bank, I know nothing of what took place at Upoto when the *A.I.A.* passed it, beyond the fact that there was some shooting. Both steamers being in need of repairs, after remaining two days at Bangala, proceeded to Léopoldville, where I arrived August 10th, after an absence of nine months.

II.

Léopoldville itself had changed little since I last saw it, a new store or two being all the additions to the buildings of the station; but the lower end of Stanley Pool—or rather the six miles of the Congo between the Pool and "Léo"—presented quite a lively appearance, with the English, American, Dutch, and French flags flying

from the different missions and trading-factories now established. The *coup-d'œil* was somewhat spoilt, a month later, by an edict from Boma, which enacted that no flag but that of the State was to be displayed on any of the flag-staffs on the Upper Congo. The French tricolor still continued to enliven the scene on the north bank, but on the south side all flags disappeared, with the exception of that on Léopold Hill and of the Dutch factory flag, which was removed to a pole on one of the houses. As the *Henry Reed* steamed towards Nshassa, a large stern-wheeler, shining with new paint, and carrying the stars and stripes, approached us. She turned out to be the *Florida*, the newly-launched steamer of the Sanford Exploring Expedition, now established in the old State station at Nshassa. On the beach before the Dutch factory, and also before that of Daumas, Beraud, et Cie., on the north bank, were the nearly finished hulls of two more steamers; while at Léopoldville, the frames and plates of the *Roi des Belges*, another stern-wheeler, belonging to "La Compagnie du Congo pour le Commerce et l'Industrie," were only awaiting the arrival of the engineers to be put together; and the beams and planks of the *Ville de Bruxelles* were daily arriving *vid* Lukungu and Manyanga. The *Henry Reed* having been handed back to the Livingstone Inland Mission, I rejoined the *A.I.A.*, and having thoroughly overhauled her, left for Bangala, August 23; and, being heavily loaded, and travelling slowly, only arrived Sept. 11. On the 29th, the Haoussas at Bangala had completed their three years' term of service, which obliged me to take another trip to the Pool. Accordingly, the men having been packed on board almost as tightly as figs in a box, we started; and though I had not been three weeks at Bangala, it was no small relief to escape once more from the forested plain that extends almost uninterruptedly from Lukolela to the Aruwhimi, and emerge into the broad channels above Bolobo, with their park-like banks and grass-covered uplands. Here "hippos" may be seen by the hundred—sometimes in ones and twos, more often in herds of from ten to thirty—standing in the shallow water, or swimming about just under the lee of a sandbank, diving, and returning to the surface with a loud snort. Now and then one may be observed lifting his head out of water, and slowly opening his jaws preparatory to relieving the tedium of hippo life with a yawn. Slowly and smoothly, as if worked by hydraulic machinery, his jaws expand, as he raises his head clear of the water—wider and wider becomes his mouth, till his tusks gleam white in the sunlight, and you wonder if it would not be possible, were one near enough, to look down and survey his last meal in process of digestion. But he has not done! Another stretch opens his jaws some six inches wider, and just as you are expecting to see him turn inside out, he closes with a loud snap, and with a splash disappears from view. I have seen a hippo seize a canoe of nearly two feet beam in his mouth, which will give some idea of the extent to which he is capable of opening that feature in an ordinary way; but even that is nothing to one of his yawns. Flocks of ducks may be seen on the sandbanks of this part of the river, and form a welcome change of "chop" when one can get near enough to shoot one or two: here also is the

beautiful white heron, in company with pelicans and flamingoes, and an occasional adjutant-bird,[1] gravely stalking up and down a stretch of sand; while flocks of jacos or grey parrots, easily distinguished by the short, quick, agitated motion of their wings, fly screaming overhead. As the steamer rushes past the low banks — the grasses, reeds, and papyrus swaying about in the wash of the screw—a sudden rush and loud splash announce the hasty retreat of a crocodile, disturbed in the middle of his afternoon nap by a rushing fiery monster, which is come and gone almost before he knows what has happened. On a low sand-spit, projecting beyond the grasses, may sometimes be seen a monster crocodile, perhaps upwards of fifty feet long; at any rate, I have seen several considerably longer than the little *A.I.A.*, and she measures forty-two feet. On one occasion I had landed on a large sandbank to shoot ducks. Having bagged one, and seeing that the rest had alighted beyond a low ridge of sand, I stooped down and crawled along behind the ridge till I thought I was within range, when I raised my head and looked over. Sure enough there were the ducks, not fifty yards from me, while, half-way between me and them, lay the biggest crocodile I had yet seen. Comparing him with the *A.I.A.*, which lay in deep water some 300 yards off, I reckoned him to be quite fifty feet long; while the centre of the saw-like ridge on the top of his back must have been about four feet above the sand on which his belly rested. Having only a shot-gun with me, I had, on first seeing him, sent a native boy who was with me for my rifle, and made the foregoing observations while waiting for his return. The crocodile, meantime, took no notice of me—either because he was asleep, or because I was out of his sight, being, to use a nautical term, on his starboard quarter, taking care to keep well out of range of his huge tail. As the boy was a long time in coming, I considered it advisable to get a little farther off, and, in so doing, alarmed the ducks, which flew away to another bank. As we were quite out of meat on board, this sight so wrought upon my feelings that, forgetting all about the crocodile, I took a snap shot after the ducks,

[1] Talking of adjutant-birds, I heard a good story from Mr Richards of the Baptist Mission at Lukolela. It seems that Mr Comber, of the same mission, used to keep a tame adjutant at Lutété (or Wathen) Station, which roamed about the station-yard, with clipped wings, in company with monkeys, parrots, and other pets—among them a kitten belonging to Mr Comber. One day this kitten was heard mewing piteously, though it was nowhere to be seen. At last, noticing that the sounds appeared to proceed from the adjutant, who was standing with his beak wide open, as though engaged in swallowing something with an effort, Mr Comber walked up to him, and looking down his throat, saw the end of the kitten's tail about to disappear. Thereupon he grasped the tail and hauled the kitten out, still alive. Mr Richards told me that the truth of this story had been doubted in England: for my part I see no reason to disbelieve it, and would recommend those who do to pay a visit to the Zoo and inspect the adjutants there. Those I have seen on the Congo held their heads as high as a tall man, and had beaks and throats of enormous capacity, adapted—like those of pelicans and other birds which lead a similar life—to the catching and swallowing whole of large fish. The Lutété adjutant, I am told, on another occasion swallowed a small dead monkey entire. As for the kitten—it is a well-known fact that cats have nine lives!

which I missed, but so frightened the huge saurian that he made off for the water, scattering the sand far and wide with a sweep of his tail.

Some miles back, across the grassy plains (which abound in herds of tawny and black buffalo), may be seen the hill-ranges, which, gradually coming nearer, form the high banks of the river about Bolobo. Here, where the islands are fewer and more scattered, the full breadth of the lordly river (between four and five miles) comes into view; while on a clear sunny day the hills on the north bank form a splendid panorama, especially when the sun, setting behind them, bathes the scene in purple and gold. On the south side, the high rocky banks, crowned with villages nestling in groves of palms and bananas, form a welcome change from the monotonous flatness of the plain behind us.

From Bolobo to the Kwa the river is fairly straight, narrowing down to some two miles, with the hills rising in height on either side; and a run down on the strong current, when the evening breeze has tempered the heat of the day, amply repays one for the toilsome ascent. From the mouth of the Kwa its course is nearly due south for about ten miles, when it is suddenly deflected to the east 'by the rocky point of Ganchu, forming a large bay in the left bank, and then resuming its former southerly course. Below this, on the left bank, is Gobila's (a portrait of this chief may be seen in 'The Congo,' vol. i. p. 508), near the spot where Mswata station once stood. Here we stopped to buy a fowl or two; and having already been plentifully supplied with fresh vegetables by the French missionaries of St Paul du Kassai,[1] we considered ourselves very well off in the matter of victuals.

Below Gobila's the river winds between towering hills—those on the right bank, which are the highest, being covered with thick forest, alternating with patches of long grass. The forest mostly occupies the valleys and lower slopes of the hills, their tops being clothed with grass; but now and then one sees a hill the top of which is covered with forest, while the sides are bare or grass-grown; while hills entirely forested or grass-covered occasionally form a pleasing contrast. Those on the left bank are mostly covered with grass—a low scrubby forest lining the river; while fan-palms (*Hyphæne guineensis*), singly or in groves, are seen at intervals. As we descend, the river narrows, till, just below Pururu Island, it is not much more than 1¼ mile wide, though of tremendous depth, after which the width again increases as we near the Pool. Pururu Island is quite a picture in itself—the upper half being covered with a splendid grove of fan-palms, while the lower is clothed with thick forest, where elephants may sometimes be seen tearing down branches from the trees to get at the young leaves. A little below this is Dualla Island, smaller in extent and entirely covered with forest; and then we come into view of a brown rocky cliff on the right bank, from the top of which the forest stretches away up the slope of the hills. On the opposite side, a little lower down, is One Palm Point—a rocky ridge projecting into the river, and marked by a splendid

[1] This station was afterwards abandoned, though some Belgian priests have since gone out to occupy the same site.

Hyphæne palm standing conspicuously out above the low scrub. Rounding this point on a strong current, we came in view of Lissa Market, and the *En Avant*, on her way to mount the Oubangi, lying among the long grass that fringed the shore. Perhaps by this time the vexed question of the identity of the Wellé Makua and the Oubangi has been settled by the brave little steamer which bore Stanley up the Congo. As it was about 5 P.M., we steamed in and camped alongside her; and Captain Van Gèle having given me my mails (which he was taking up to Equator), I retired to the *A.I.A.*, where, my boy having made up my bed, I pushed aside the mosquito-net and lay down to digest some home news before going to dine on board the *En Avant*. Next morning (Oct. 6) we were off with daylight, and passing the spot where the Wampomo discharges its inky waters into the main stream, and Palmyra Bay—near which a reef of rocks lurks in mid-stream just below the water to catch unwary steamers — we entered the Pool about ten o'clock, and before three in the afternoon were once more made fast alongside the *Stanley* on "Léo" beach—within two or three days of a year from the time I had arrived from Stanley Falls with Captain Coquilhat and Mr Deane. The repairs which I had to undertake on board the steamer, as well as a slight attack of fever, delayed our departure for Bangala till October 27.

Having cleared Nshassa, we were steaming across the Pool when my eye was caught by a tent erected on Long Island, on a spot well known to me a year before as a favourite hunting-camp of Captain Bailey. I knew that he had lately returned to the Congo along with Mr Deane (now restored to health) for the sole purpose of hunting, and had, indeed, quitted Nshassa for Long Island only two days ago. As we turned towards the shore a second tent came into view, from which emerged Mr Deane, shouting to us an invitation to come ashore. We did so, and found that they had that morning shot two antelopes and a buffalo. Long Island abounds in the latter, which is perhaps the most dangerous animal to the hunter to be met with on the Congo, as he is extremely hard to kill, unless hit in a vital part, and very fierce when wounded—charging down on his enemy, and goring him with his sharp and powerful horns, should he not be quick enough in getting out of the way. The antelopes were very fine animals, of a dark-grey colour, with faint white stripes down the flanks, and with very graceful heads and horns. I had several times seen both dark-grey and red antelopes marked with white in this way, and at first thought them different species, but afterwards discovered that one was the male and the other the female. I have also bought from the natives at Mpeza several light-grey skins and one or two small pairs of horns, which, I believe, belong to a very pretty little gazelle; but I have never seen this animal either dead or alive, though, judging from the number of skins the Langa-Langa offer for sale, it must be plentiful in their country. Having been regaled by Mr Deane—in the absence of Captain Bailey, who was out hunting—with antelope-steaks (which somewhat resemble very tender, juicy beefsteak), and presented with a hind-quarter of the same animal, we started again and camped for the night at the upper

end of the Pool. It was a fine, clear, moonlight night, and the view across to Dover Cliffs was like a scene from fairyland.

Next morning we started early, and had a fine long day's run up to Dualla Island. We observed several flocks of guinea-fowl on shore; the bronze ibis, with its long beak and splendid plumage, was occasionally seen flying about in twos and threes, and the spur-winged plover wheeled round and round over the sandbanks; while from the bush came the soft cry of the wood-pigeon. Everything this run seemed to be in our favour. We found plenty of fuel every night, and had no head-winds or storms to delay us. On November 3 we reached Lukolela, where the Baptist Mission was slowly but surely approaching completion; on the 6th, we stopped an hour or two at Equator to get wood, and, continuing our journey, arrived at Bangala before noon on the 9th, having been only a little over thirteen days from Leopoldville—the quickest run yet made.

At Bangala the station was fast improving, and a new red-brick house, intended for a mess-room and provision store, was nearly finished. Owing to the damp climate, wood quickly rots, unless painted or preserved in some other way; and paint not being procurable in sufficient quantities, M. Van Kerckhoven had decided to use as little wood as possible, and therefore made the doors arched, and the windows with a square brick column down the centre, and a double arch at the top in alternate red and white bricks, which gave the building a somewhat ecclesiastical appearance. The front door opened right into a large and lofty room, the walls of which, washed with white clay, set off the window-curtains (composed of blue *savelist*[1] and Paisley shawls, out of the trading stock of the station) to great advantage. This house, besides being strong and durable, was a great improvement in point of appearance on the older clay buildings; and when others are completed in the same style, Bangala will be no undesirable residence, except for the great disadvantage of its isolated position. During my absence some of the Bangalas had been on a trading expedition to Upoto, and had fallen out with the natives of Langa-Langa. The affair ended in the Bangalas seizing several of the up-river people, and paddling off home, arriving with their prizes a few days before the *A.I.A.* came up from Ntamo. M. Van Kerckhoven, on hearing of this, immediately bought all the prisoners from their captors; and a few days later he started, with M. Dhanis and myself, for Upoto, to try and bring the unreasonable Langa-Langa to their senses. By November 18 we were again abreast of Bokélé, to which place our prisoners belonged; and as the people of Bokélé had to send for those we wanted from Upoto, we made fast to an island, with a five-hundred-yards channel between us and the village. Towards evening on the 20th some canoes came down, with the three women belonging to the State; and having exchanged some of the prisoners for them, we were beginning to think the troublesome business at an end, when one of the women informed us that there were five more still in the hands of the chief of Upoto Having sent a message to the chief to bring these five, we waited till next morning for an

[1] Blanket cloth.

answer, when he sent an insolent demand for five slaves as a ransom for each woman. M. Van Kerckhoven sent back word that he was going away, and that if the women were not at once given up on his return, he would burn Upoto. On the 22d we arrived at Mobeka, at the mouth of the Ngala (Mangala or Mongalla) river. This town now occupies the same site as it did some years ago; but when I first arrived in the country, it was situated some fifteen miles up the Ngala. The reason of its removal was a war with the Bangalas, who completely sacked and burned the town, forcing the inhabitants to seek a more distant spot — till Lusengi, their chief, became the blood-brother of the Mundélé at Bangala, and having made peace with his old enemies, returned to the former site, where he is fast growing rich by trading in ivory. On our return to Bangala on the 23d, the *A.I.A.* was taken out of the water to be scraped and painted; and on December 2 the *Stanley* arrived from Ntamo, bringing the longed-for mails, and also Captain Thys, who had come out on a tour of inspection for the company formed to construct the Congo railway, which, for some inscrutable reason, entitles itself "La Compagnie du Congo pour le Commerce et l'Industrie." Mr Hodister, of the Sanford Exploring Expedition, had also come up to found a station, and thus establish the first trading factory among a people who, six or seven years ago, were nothing but river pirates, levying blackmail on their neighbours, and hiring themselves out as armed escorts to the trading canoes going up-river to purchase ivory. The *Stanley* left us in a few days, and during the next few weeks I was kept so busy with repairs to the whaleboat, that we could not start for Upoto till after the New Year. On the 9th of January 1888 we got under way again, this time accompanied by Mr Hodister. As it had been decided to burn Upoto unless the captives were surrendered, we had on board, besides the usual crew of nine men, over forty Bangalas, and towed the whaleboat and three large canoes, so that the little engine was strained to the utmost.

Two or three days after starting, we moored for the night off a low marshy forest, consisting mostly of rosewood-trees, with groves of palm lining the river-bank. The men having found a large dead rosewood-tree, whose trunk was some two feet six inches in diameter, began cutting it up for fuel, and, to obtain light for their work, set fire to the dead stalks and leaves which always surround the trunk of this species of palm. This is a sight which equals, if it does not surpass, the magnificent set pieces let off at an exhibition of fireworks at the Crystal Palace. At first the fire smoulders among the short dead stalks round the foot of the trunk, but gradually gaining power, at length rushes up the tree in one huge column of roaring flame, devouring all the dead foliage, and giving an indescribable beauty to the feathery palm-leaves, which stand out distinct and black against the background of flame and smoke. The end of the show is perhaps the most striking of all, when, the dead leaves being consumed, the fire dies down, leaving the bunch of palm-nuts burning away among the blackened fronds. The ball of fire, flaring away on the tree-top, is a weird spectacle seen from the river in a dark night—further set off by the smoke curling up to the stars, the utter blackness of the surrounding forest, and the reflection of the whole in the water.

Two or three palms growing close together sometimes blaze up all at once—sometimes one catches fire from another just dying out. Where there are plenty of palms, the Bangalas always contrive to have one burning when they have any work to do at night. The fire does not kill the trees, only burning up the dead stalks and leaves, and then dying out. This palm has, properly speaking, no trunk—the huge leaves rise right from the ground to a height of thirty or forty feet.

On January 16 we once more steamed round Upoto Point, and found the village up in arms to receive us. Samba and the Bangalas (who, for fear of accidents from so many men shooting on board the little steamer, had been relegated to the canoes) had paddled ahead of us as we steamed slowly past the line of villages below Upoto, and on finding the village in regular fighting order, had drawn off and begun a raid among the islands in genuine Bangala style, capturing a number of women and children hidden there, and drinking all the palm-wine they could find. When we arrived abreast of the chief's house, M. Van Kerckhoven demanded the surrender of the captives; to which the chief, having first executed a *pas seul*, replied that, if we wanted the women, we must come and fetch them, and then resumed his war-dance—while the group of hideously painted and befeathered warriors behind him joined in like a chorus, waving their shields and spears about, as they twisted their bodies into all sorts of queer contortions. Some were smeared over from head to foot with grey clay, others were bright red with camwood powder; others, again, painted over with red, white, and yellow streaks. In the midst of this performance, the order was given to our men to fire, and the chief ended his performance with a leap into the air, as a rifle-bullet "let daylight" through him. A few volleys cleared the village, and then we moved off to await the return of the Bangalas, as we were too weak to burn the place without them. They appeared shortly after, having captured some thirty-five prisoners and several canoes. The prisoners were mostly women and children, the few men among them being either old or severely wounded. It is seldom that warriors of this tribe allow themselves to be taken alive. I saw a Bangala in one of the canoes, on coming alongside the *A.I.A.*, stoop down and lift up a head dripping with blood, which he had just cut off. The sight nearly made me sick, and of course I instantly made him throw it into the river, where it sank like a lump of lead. It is the custom of the Bangalas and other warlike tribes of the Upper Congo to cut off and carry home the heads of their enemies slain in battle; and I have, in several villages, seen a large tree in front of the chief's hut on whose branches are impaled numerous human skulls. In one village, not only was the tree decorated with some forty of these ghastly trophies, but a heap of them was piled round the trunk; and round this, at a radius of about thirty feet, was a circular seat formed of clay, kept in its place by pieces of old canoes, and adorned here and there with a grinning skull. Several more were lying about, roughly shaped into drinking-cups—for this was the place where the village patriarchs held their evening *symposium*, drinking their *malafu*, like King Alboin the Lombard, out of the skulls of their enemies.

As the Bangalas—having come

across liberal quantities of palm-wine—were all more or less drunk, there was some difficulty in making them hand over their prisoners; but when these were at last all secured on board the *A.I.A.*, we steamed in close to the village, where the natives were awaiting us, with flintlock muskets and spears, while several war-canoes were visible in a creek about half a mile off. Having cleared the village with a volley or two from our rifles, and dispersed the canoes in the same way, we took the steamer in, as close as the rocks would allow us; and then the Bangalas, having landed in the canoes, were soon "scooting" about, cutting down banana-trees, and applying fire brands to the palm-leaf thatch of the huts, which, being dry as tinder, were soon in a blaze. It was a really grand sight when the flames, with a dull roar, spread up the hillside, lapping round and blackening the green banana-leaves till it had dried them up, when they shared the fate of the huts. The smoke and flames, rushing in one dense cloud up the hill, made the trees behind, when they were visible at all, look black as ink; and the bright sunshine, pouring down from above, gave a very strange effect to the scene. Presently a spreading tree in the centre of the village—under which was the usual heap of skulls—was enveloped in flames; and the heat, which was by this time intense, as the whole hillside was now one mass of fire, soon shrivelled up the foliage, and left the tree as bare as if it had been dead. Above the roar of the flames we heard the bang of the Langa-Langa muskets—they could not have taken good aim, as they hit no one—and the sharper crack of the rifles wielded by the Bangalas, whose black forms were seen rushing about in the fierce heat like so many salamanders. How they endured it I am at a loss to imagine, for the heat was so intense where the *A.I.A.* lay—nearly 100 yards off-shore to windward—that I was several times glad to turn away my face. In half an hour all was over, nothing being left on the blackened hillside but smouldering posts and heaps of ashes; and we steamed away for Bangala—stopping a few minutes at Bokélé to tell the people that we would restore the thirty-five prisoners to Upoto when the State captives were given up. We had, besides the whaleboat, five large canoes in tow, and in all 130 people on board—including Europeans, Bangalas, prisoners, our own crew, and some thirty-five slaves, whose liberty had been purchased by M. Van Kerckhoven from the natives of Mpeza. Most of them were boys and girls between the ages of ten and fifteen, with a few older men and women; and they are all at the present time working in Bangala Station, and growing fat on liberal rations of quanga and bananas—having been previously half-starved by the Mpeza people. Seeing them thus thriving and happy, one would be tempted to buy as many as possible; and at first I thought the measure a very good one, but further reflection convinced me that, as the demand creates the supply, the natives would continue to procure slaves by raids on other tribes, and sell them to the State as long as the latter was willing to buy them—so that, though the condition of those bought would be considerably improved, their place would soon be supplied by others, and perhaps dozens of men killed in some raid undertaken for the sole purpose of capturing a few boys and girls

As the country was very much disturbed, Mr Hodister, who had come up with us to see what sort of a place it was for trade, did not get much ivory. The people of Upoto and the neighbouring villages, however, must have plenty, as all the traders between Bangala and Irebu go up there to purchase the ivory which they sell to the Ba-yanzi of Bolobo, who, in their turn, pass it on to the Pool. With the crowd we had on board, it was a great relief to arrive at Bangala on the 19th of January, but there was no rest to be had just yet. Thirty Zanzibaris had finished their three years' term of service, and were to be sent down to Léopoldville; and two Belgians, who had been ill, had grown so much worse during my absence that, as we had no medical officer at the station, the chief decided to send them down too. This time the whaleboat was required for use at Bangala, and a canoe towed alongside was our only additional accommodation. I leave my readers to imagine the discomfort of this run, especially for the two sick men, whose pain, in spite of all we could do for them, must have been considerably increased by the throbbing and shaking of the little steamer, which, owing to her heavily-laden condition, was more violent than usual. Next day we arrived at Equator, where Mr Banks, of the Livingstone Inland Mission, was kind enough to prescribe for our invalids, who, by his timely assistance, were enabled to pass a quiet night on shore in the Sanford Company's station. Next morning, one of them who was down with dysentery, and whose sufferings had been so much intensified by the shaking of the steamer that we thought he could never reach Equator alive, seemed to have rallied so far that we again hoped to bring him safely to Léopoldville,—all the more so, as he told us that the agonising pain of the day before had nearly ceased. We started as early as possible, in order to reach the Baptist Mission Station at Lukolela before night; but our patient soon began to sink rapidly, and at 10 A.M. M. Dhanis came to me to ask if I could not go any faster, as he did not think the sick man could live many hours. But the little *A.I.A.* was doing all she knew; and there was nothing for it but to await the end, which came a little after mid-day, when, slowly and silently, death entered the boat, and we could do no more. The Zanzibaris, who had been attending on him since we left Bangala, washed the corpse, and covering it with blankets, laid it out on a kind of hurdle astern—as we had decided to try and reach Lukolela sooner than dig a nameless grave in the forest. Owing to a tremendous tornado, we had to stop some three hours, and therefore camped on a sandbank that night, and did not reach Lukolela till next day. Mr Richards[1] and Mr Darby, of the Baptist Mission, on learning the state of the case, rendered us every assistance in their power—even setting their carpenters to make a coffin, while our men dug a grave at the top of a high bank, behind the old State station, overlooking the river. One grave already marked the spot,—being that of a State official, who had been killed by a buffalo three years before. And there, in the silence of the deep jungle—disturbed only by a prowling bush-cat or jackal, or by the chattering of the monkeys and

[1] Since dead—August, 1888.

screaming of the parrots in the lofty trees overhead—we raised a cairn of stones to mark where his mortal remains had been laid to rest. Having still another sick man to consider, we left the mission the same evening, and having taken in fuel at the lower end of the village, where there was plenty of dry wood, started off once more. The river was very low, and we had much trouble from sandbanks,—especially at Two Palm Point, a few miles above Bolobo—so called from two tall *Hyphæne* palms, growing close together, which form a well-known landmark. Having vainly tried to find a channel among the sandbanks at the end of this point, where there were barely three feet of water, we let out a long chain, and all the Zanzibaris, jumping overboard, seized it and dragged the *A.I.A.* bodily over,—probably at the expense of the paint on her keel. A tame elephant would have been very useful under the circumstances.

We reached Léopoldville on the 30th of January, without any further incident, except a two hours' halt in the hospitable tents of the two Nimrods of the Congo, Messrs Deane and Bailey,[1] whom we found encamped in a picturesque situation opposite Pururu Island. The invalid having been handed over to the doctor, and the *A.I.A.* made fast alongside the *Stanley*, I was free to discuss the news and a cocktail with the captain and engineers of the latter. The cocktail, however, turned out to be a snare and a delusion; for Captain Skagerström, having no spice, surreptitiously introduced into the mixture a few grains of quinine, with the result that we all vowed never to intrust that perfidious Scandinavian with the compounding of another, and that notwithstanding his assurances that he had done it to keep off the fever.

I found that part of the expedition for Stanley Falls was still at Léopoldville, consisting of some officers sent up by the State to assist Tippoo Tip, who had come round from Zanzibar with Stanley and the Emin Pasha Expedition, and gone straight on to his post as Governor at the Falls, where he had now been some six months. Captain Van de Velde, in charge of the expedition, was down with fever; and some of his loads not having arrived from Matadi, the *Stanley* was awaiting their arrival and the chief's recovery, to take them all up to Kinsi Katini.

We left again, with stores for Bangala, on February 3. It was during this run, somewhere near Bolobo, that we suddenly brought up on a sandbank, with only three feet of water. The engines were at once stopped, but the steamer's bow was embedded in the sand, which seemed to heave up and down under us, and the water was strangely disturbed. I was looking for the cause of this unusual commotion (which I should have set down as being caused by our running into a hippo, had the river been deeper at that spot, but there was not enough water to cover one), when I saw an enormous crocodile—*longer*, I am certain, than the *A.I.A.*, and therefore over forty feet—rush across the bank and tumble into the deep water beyond. I never before saw

[1] Since this was written, news has reached Europe of Mr Deane's death. He was killed by an elephant at Lukolela, May 15, 1888, and buried near the Baptist Mission, on the site described above.

a large crocodile move so quickly, and I had no time to get a shot at him. He must have heard us coming, and been trying to make for the deep water on our side of the bank, when we ran into him and jammed him into the sand. We struck him while moving at the rate of four miles an hour, but during the short time he was in view, I could not see that he bore any marks of the collision.

On the evening of the 12th we camped at Lukolela, and on the 14th arrived opposite Usindi, where we landed the son of Miyongo, who had come up from Nshassa with us, having been for some time previously employed by the Sanford Exploring Expedition. His father, Miyongo, one of the chiefs of Usindi, was the man rescued by Stanley from the wreck of his canoe below Lukolela, and restored to his village. Next morning, before we left, he came on board with a present of a sheep, eggs, and fowls, and then demanded about twenty times their value in cloth and other goods as a return present —such is the nature of these "blameless Ethiopians." Having at length, if not satisfied, at least convinced him that we were not to be bled any further, he took to his canoe, and with many handshakings allowed us to pursue our way.

We found that during our absence the people of Upoto had, through the medium of some other tribes, made overtures of peace; so we hoped that, on the arrival of the *Stanley*, the expedition would not only establish the State's authority at the Falls, but also settle this troublesome business of ours, which had now been going on for nearly eighteen months. Owing to Captain Van de Velde's death, however, the *Stanley* did not arrive at Bangala till the beginning of April—and then without the expedition, which remained at Léopoldville waiting for Van de Velde's successor. It is expected that, by the time the Stanley returns to Léopoldville, all will be in readiness, and the long-delayed expedition to Stanley Falls will at last get under way. But even should there be no more delays, Tippoo Tip will, by the time it arrives at Stanley Falls, have been there nearly a year, during which time not a word of communication has passed between the Falls and Ntamo, so that the state of affairs at the former place is utterly unknown.[1]

Several times in the course of this narrative I have had occasion to mention Samba, the interpreter, or rather one of the interpreters, employed at Bangala Station; and a few words about this man's history may not be out of place, by way of conclusion. He belongs to the Bakumu tribe, who inhabit a stretch of country on the right bank of the Congo, just above Stanley Falls. Some years ago he was sold by these people as a slave to the natives of Yambinga, and was bought from them by some traders of Lulanga, who had gone up to Yambinga to purchase ivory. Some time after, he was again sold by them to the people of Irebu, and by them passed on to Chumbiri, only to be again sold to some native trader at Ntamo. He would probably have been passed on in this way, till he reached the coast, had not Stanley bought him, and taken him up the river when he went to found Stanley Falls Station. Here he was left, probably to act as in-

[1] This was written in March 1888.

terpreter; but he made himself useful in many other ways, especially by his hunting expeditions, from which he always returned with some fresh meat or fish for the station. Shortly after Mr Deane took command of the Falls, Samba, with two Haoussas, was out in a canoe above the cataracts. The canoe, drawn into the rapids, was carried over the fall into the roaring channel below. The two Haoussas were drowned, but Samba saved himself by swimming, though how he escaped being dashed to pieces on the rocks passes my comprehension. When the station was attacked by the Arabs, Samba proved himself the best fighter among the black men there; and I have several times heard Mr Deane praise his courage and faithfulness. When all seemed lost, and the station had been blown up, Samba provided himself with a spear, and took to the bush; and, though he did not now remain with Mr Deane, continued to supply him with food, and so kept him from absolute starvation. When Deane was obliged to take to a canoe and go down the river, Samba, unaware of the fact, remained on the island; and when Captain Coquilhat and myself arrived in the *A.I.A.*, he came on board, and led us from one to another of Mr Deane's hiding-places, only to discover the smouldering remains of his camp-fires. At last Samba found out from some other natives that Mr Deane had purchased a canoe and gone down-stream; and again coming on board, with his sole earthly possessions—a loin-cloth and a spear (which last I bought from him, and still have)—accompanied us to the village, where at length we found Mr Deane, and thence to Bangala. Here he still lives, in hopes of some day returning to his people, when his great enemies, the slave-raiding Arabs, have been driven out. Until the authority of the Free State is in some measure re-established in that region, it will not be safe for Samba to show his face there; for he is a marked man among the Arabs, and has done them too much injury to hope for mercy should he fall into their hands. The particulars of his earlier history I had from himself, and only regret that I do not know enough of the native languages to get a fuller account, as it would form a most interesting narrative, and would give some idea of the Congo before it was ever seen by Stanley. He is the only instance I ever met with of a native who showed any gratitude either by word or deed. Freed by Bula Matari, he has faithfully served the State ever since; whereas most natives, on being rescued from slavery by the white man, try to run away, and, if successful, perhaps help their former masters to fight against their deliverer. If a native gives a present, he expects to receive ten times its value in return. If you find a man dying by the wayside, save him, and restore him to his people, you will not get a word of thanks from him or his; but he will think you a fool for not tying him up and demanding a high price from his tribe for his release, with the alternative of selling him into slavery if it is not paid. Were all natives such as Samba, the regeneration of Africa would be comparatively easy.

A TRUE GHOST STORY.

"*Hamlet.* 'Tis very strange.
Horatio. As I do live, my honoured lord, 'tis true."
—*Hamlet*, Act 1. Scene 2.

"For sale, the old mansion-house, Haseley the Great,"—
(Fit home for a sportsman of modest estate):—
In "pleasure-grounds, gardens, nut-walk, orchard, lands,
Laid out ornamentally," see where it stands!
"Good water, good stables, and coach-house at back,
And all in the heart of the Oxfordshire pack."
Don't credit the proverb which vows that the place
That is nighest the church is furthest from grace:—
"This messuage is freehold; tithe-free;"—and can boast
Of owning that rarest of chattels,—A GHOST!

Here, fox-hunting squire, of contemplative mind,
Might cellarage, kennels, and sepulture find:
Meet "*Berkshire*," or "*Bicester*"; drink ale at "*The Crown*",
And then,—in church precincts,—lie soberly down.
To mortal's ambition how seldom is given
Such pure combination of hunting and heaven!—
At auction, in public, no bidder drew near:
By contract, in private, it should not be dear:—
The lot shall be his who will offer the most:—
No charge being made for goodwill of THE GHOST.

The Ghost may perhaps be allowed to refer
To such a conveyance as she would prefer:
(First, make an appointment with her, if you please,
At midnight, beneath the old grove of elm-trees):—
Should a bargain be struck, on terms as agreed,
She then would "*deliver her act and her deed:*"
And "*witness her own execution:*"—("*her mark,*
In loco sigilli," *cross-bones in the dark.*)
Then borrow on *mortgage.* When duly engrossed,
Devise would be made in *mortmain*, by THE GHOST.

A purchaser offered. A bargain was made.
The Ghost in a manner quite novel was *laid.*
The mansion-house opened as "Schooling for Boys,"—
And her nerves couldn't tolerate cricket or noise!
Your ghosts are but volatile creatures at best,
And this one was airy and light as the rest.
"*Let men,*" she soliloquised, "*chuckle and scoff;—*
I'll pack up my traps, cut a stick, and go off!"
To sight, thus a darling illusion was lost;—
To memory, dear is that fugitive GHOST!

J. P. M.

THE EMPEROR FREDERICK.

THE year which has just passed, and which to most of us has brought only the usual level of human affairs—the mingled thread of good and evil fortune—has witnessed the conclusion of one of the most touching and memorable tragedies that history has to record. These are great words, especially in face of the fact that events both wonderful and terrible are happening around us daily, and that the highest tragedies of poetry are often equalled, if not surpassed, in passion and excitement by the occurrences of the most seeming simple lives. But these secrets of existence among common men are mostly concealed from the public gaze. The shrinking from publicity, which is natural to our reticent race, hides from us not only many miseries and evil things, but also many of the highest deeds and most noble struggles of nature. The most of us perhaps know better things of ourselves (as well as worse) than any stranger knows, but our best efforts and deepest sacrifices remain unrevealed. It is one of the advantages, perhaps, to the world in general of the institution of monarchy, that it creates a number of families to whom this withdrawal from the light is impossible, and whose life, so high up upon the mountain-tops of existence, is visible from every direction, unconcealable from other men. This has not always been an edifying spectacle. Like the gods of Greek poetry, the potentates of earth have been often discovered to be sadly like other people, and their doings anything but an example to the crowds around. But of late there have been various very striking exceptions to this once too universal rule. Our own Queen has grown gradually into a symbol of everything that is wisest and best, not only to our own, but to other nations; and even those points in her which an impatient people were apt to think of as exaggerations of sorrow and constancy, have aided the great effect of a pure and absolute faithfulness and love which she has set before the world. And now, in a second generation, in another country, under circumstances perhaps more striking and remarkable than any poet could have conceived, another royal personage stands out in the pale light of anguish and disappointment—a man of mould as heroic as his position is remarkable—an example and a wonder to the world. Other men have, no doubt, been as brave, as self-forgetful, as stainless in honour and perfect in suffering, but none have so stood out by force of circumstances, in the sight of all the nations, as an example of what honour and fortitude and flesh and blood can do.

The little book in which the story of this great life is told—a story which at present we can all supplement from our own recollections, adding a hundred incidents—does not even pretend to be worthy of the subject.[1] It is a bare and dry, if, at the same time, an honest and simple, record of the events of the Emperor's life. It is, no doubt, much too early to attempt a more

[1] Frederick: Crown Prince and Emperor. By Rennell Rodd. David Stott, London.

satisfactory picture—and this will amply answer its purpose, which is that of adding to the funds of the Hospital for Diseases of the Throat, in which both the late Emperor and his wife took a deep and natural interest; but we may be pardoned if we doubt whether the life of this great Frederick was not too important to serve such a purpose, or whether it was permissible to issue it so hurriedly and so slightly, even in a benevolent cause. Mr Rennell Rodd knew the Emperor, and had opportunities of judging his character and work. The Empress in a letter, which is the most touching part of the book, says so, and he himself says so in so many words; but there is little to prove it in what he has written. It is one thing to have opportunities, and another to be able to make use of them. The thin thread of narrative with which we are here provided, gives a certain guidance to the facts of the Emperor's life, no doubt perfectly trustworthy and exact; but in no other way does it increase our acquaintance with its illustrious subject. We might even say that we knew him better by the mere newspaper records, and the countless anecdotes that have been floating about the world; and that these impressions are but blurred and deadened by the present formal report.

But criticism is fortunately unnecessary upon this point. During the last six months at least of his life the Crown Prince of Germany, for a short period the sovereign of that great country, lived not only in the fierce light that beats upon a throne, but in a house full of windows and open to all the world. The visitors at San Remo, who came with undisguised frankness from all their hotels to the road which was outside his garden-wall, and there pitched their camp-stools and sat down to wait his appearing, were nothing but a vulgar symbol of the attitude of the rest of the world. We all strained our eyes to watch his rising and his lying down, the coming and going of the doctors round his sick-bed, and all the most private details of a life which, under no other circumstances, could have been so laid bare to the common eye. A crisis so extraordinary could scarcely come in an ordinary human existence at all. He had grown to manhood and to the complete prime of life—that matured and mellow season when youth is more distant than age, and even the snows are within sight—without coming to anything beyond the position of heir. He had been held suspended, as it were, upon the threshold of an office for which he had been elaborately trained, and to which all his thoughts had been directed during his entire life. A great ideal of the manner in which that office should be exercised had grown within him, and day by day had brought more certainly near, notwithstanding an unusual, an almost unnatural delay, to the moment when in his own person he would be called upon to carry that ideal out. The situation in itself was as full of interest as any human situation could be. And the behaviour of the Crown Prince in it was everything that the highest moralist, the most delicate taste, could desire. When he came into the foreground at all, it was solely in the service of his country, to fight her battles, to care for her poor. The one independent act of his life, unrevealed till after his death, and for which another man had received the credit for years—the Crown Prince magnanimously

standing by, hearing those plaudits addressed to another which were his right—was to put the crown of empire upon his father's head, and to bind in one the brotherhood of secondary powers, which by themselves were weak, but when linked together invincible. Prince Bismarck has hitherto got all the credit of this splendid scheme, much of which he deserved, though at the final moment his courage failed him. No doubt there would always be a few men at the head of affairs who knew which hand it was which gave the final impulse, and the Crown Prince would have the support of knowing that in that selectest circle justice was done him—which is the only thing that many great men have had to fall back upon, and especially the resource of kings—but so far as the world was concerned, that high-handed statesman received and never disowned all the honour. What strange comments upon public opinion, what reflections upon contemporary justice, must have passed through the mind of the Prince standing by—one can imagine with a grave smile upon his countenance—saying nothing, permitting the praises to go the other way to the man who had almost forgotten the respect due to the heir-apparent in opposing that scheme of which he now took all the glory! This, however, as we have said, was the one independent act, upon his own initiation, of the Crown Prince's wonderfully disciplined and self-subdued life. Talk of the freedom of monarchs—of the uncontrolled sway even of an absolute king—and then turn and see this man, in the full splendour of manhood, taming himself to the mastery of a museum, to the oversight of benevolent societies, with every impulse of statesmanship in him controlled, standing by unconsulted, with less power in politics theoretically than an English voter. What a training for an emperor!

Alas! a training never save for a moment to bear its natural fruit! The situation changed from one of the highest interest and hope to the most tragical conceivable by man. A cloud no bigger than a man's hand, like the famous image of Scripture, soon covered the sky with darkness. For a time the deeply interested, deeply impressed spectators, stood breathless, watching whether the aged father, at the extreme limit of mortal life, or the vigorous son, in the full force of years, would tread the darksome pathway first into the unknown. And then at last the end of the long probation came, and the monarch, for fifty years trained to this office, ascended the throne. But he mounted its steps a dying man; and the forces so long repressed, the plans so long cherished, the noble reign so strongly conceived, culminated in four months' possession. Had Frederick of Prussia been a far less interesting man than he was, his history would still have been one of those which lacerate the heart with a sense of that irony of faith, that tragic Tantalus draught which mocks but never reaches the lips, which of all human deprivations is the one most hard to bear. But when we consider what he was, his nobleness, his patience, his self-control, the ideal of highest kingship which was in his heart, and which, there is every reason to believe, he would have fulfilled as perfectly as it is given to man to do, the position appeals more and more strongly to the mind. He was ambitious—what strong man could be less, with such possibilities ever before him!—but that he had to sacrifice, like everything else. He had to

see the methods of which he had not approved triumphant over him, at the very moment when he had hoped to replace them by a better way. He had to lie smiling upon his painful bed, and witness everything he desired slipping from his hand. Sufferers at the stake and by the sword have had a shorter and a lesser martyrdom to bear. His noblest desires became the instruments of his deepest pain. And he died at last in the fulness of his days—at an age when most men have accomplished all of which they are capable—with promise unfulfilled, life unachieved, and the great work, for which he was so fully prepared, undone.

But whether this great prince has not done more for the world by thus falling unfulfilled than he could have done had his high ideal become entangled in the commonplace of practice, and perhaps failed in the everlasting struggle with dull forces of use and wont, who can tell? The favourite thought of humanity is this unachievement. Hamlet carries us higher and interests us more deeply than any king that ever ruled in Denmark or elsewhere. The hope, the plan, the promise, is all in all for man. To mean nobly, to aim highly, to endure, would seem to be our best and most characteristic position among all the worlds of God. Certain it is that there is none which so touches the heart. The great renunciation; the noble, patient, and sublime consent not to be, since God's will is so; the smile of supreme resignation while all we have dreamed of escapes from our hands,—no completed hope nor fulfilled life affects us like these. And perhaps to an age so eager for doing, so restless and impatient, so hurried and self-willed, the spectacle on so great a scale and in so elevated a place, at once of the powerlessness of humanity, and of its inherent greatness, its physical incapacities, its spiritual strength, is of more use than any exhibition of success and power. Our hearts forsake the brighter pathway to linger on that which leads steadfast to the skies through tempest and gloom.

Prince Frederick William of Prussia was born of a family which has always been characteristically and triumphantly national—a most successful race, enriching and elevating itself with astonishing rapidity, but by methods which would not, perhaps, bear too close an examination, but not endearing itself to the other nations round. His father did much, by sheer dint of living, to make himself a picturesque and remarkable figure in the world—not to say that the events of his reign and the sudden rise of his country into a dominating and imperial power were very imposing and impressive to the imagination, as well as the group of singularly great generals and statesmen which he had the wisdom or good luck to gather round him. But the tradition of a prince who was the brother and friend of all, with the genial and gracious accost, the native kindness of look and word which belonged by nature to Frederick, was quite new and unaccustomed among them. His first individual appearance beyond the region of education and training is in that pretty Highland scene, familiar to every reader, when the young German cavalier discovered on the hillside the sprig of white heather, and made it the occasion to his little princess of his love-tale. There is something pastoral, idyllic, in the pretty story, piquant from its contrast with all we know of courts—no courtly hangers-on

in attendance, the boys and girls straying over the moor, the keen exhilarating air of the north blowing against the fresh young faces. An honest, happy youth, with a touch of German sentiment much more simple than our own, and everything so youthful and fresh about, even the father and mother who smiled upon the pair.

After this the world knew little of Prince Frederick William for many years. He reappeared in the wars which began with Denmark, and went on through the brief conflict with Austria into that severe and triumphant struggle with France, which has changed the aspect of Europe and placed Prussia in so great and powerful a position at the head of the German States. It was only in the last and greatest of these wars that his full importance, both in war and peace, was revealed. It was under his command that the first great successes, which struck a chill to the very heart of the adversary, and filled France with the most woful astonishment as well as dismay, were gained. Everybody had been aware of his personal character, his virtue and honour, the happy and spotless life he led, his readiness for every good work, during the comparative obscurity in which the early years of his married life were passed. But a man may be a very good man, with everything in him that can make a family blessed, without being a great general or understanding even the elements of statesmanship; and war is a game in which the ability of the player can only be discovered by practical tests. He had developed another great quality, even before those of generalship. He had found the best way of linking the different parts of a heterogeneous army together, making, if not the lion lie down with the lamb, at least the German with the Bavarian—an almost equally difficult matter; and his popularity with the army had preceded all proofs of his power to handle it. But these proofs, already known to experts, were given to the world in fullest evidence at Weissenberg, Wörth, and Sedan, those tremendous reverses which brought down the French Empire to the dust. What further the Crown Prince had done, and how much of the great event, almost more important to Germany than the rout of her enemy's forces, was due to his exertions, was known to no one out of his immediate circle. But he came out of that great war one of the most eminent of Prussia's younger generals, and, at the same time, one of the most popular men in the new empire.

After this memorable episode of life, the Prince again disappeared from our eyes into the mists. He was always good, always useful, watching over the sick and poor, encouraging art, sparing no trouble to make all about him happy. The blaze of warlike success had not turned his head, nor the excitements of the field lessened his pleasure in the quiet delights of home. The others were but episodes: this was his life. He relapsed at once into the quiet, and accepted again the secondary post, which was all that was permitted to him, without apparently a single murmur. It is somewhat hard upon a prince when he has reached to something almost more than maturity, to be turned back to the hospitals and museums, to ceremonies of opening and closing, to charity and art. Perhaps it is a sacrifice necessary to the position of an heir-apparent. The Crown Prince stepped back into these without a hesitation. Only he and his choicest friends knew that

it was he and not any Iron Chancellor who had put the imperial crown upon his father's head. He only was aware how much the economy of State, from which he was held apart, owed to him, both in fact and in sentiment. And with that high honour which must be, in such circumstances, the greatest of gifts, he said nothing as to the part he had played. Absolutely faithful to his place, and the reticences and self-denial which it enjoined, he stepped aside to his domestic life, to his wife and children and country neighbours, and harmless offices of State. And until there suddenly began to creep through the world rumours of a fatal illness, the Crown Prince appeared before the world no more.

His life suddenly again became the centre of every eye when he took shelter in the Villa Zirio, and the contentions round his sick-bed became known. In England the whisper of possible calamity had roused a new interest around the stalwart figure—the most distinguished of all the band of princes who formed the Queen's guard of honour at the Jubilee. His gallant appearance, soldierlike and manful, recalled all the prepossessions in his favour, which had lain dormant so long. He was the husband of the first daughter of England, a title warmly responded to at a moment when all those bonds of family—which the entire nation prides itself in taking up when any occasion arises—were especially felt. And every one will remember how the interest grew. When the year which is just completed began, the disease was every day growing in interest. The sanguine hoped, and the despondent despaired, as if the illustrious sufferer had been one of their own immediate circle; and the battle of the doctors was fought in many a remote English village, where the disputants found a difficulty in pronouncing the very names of the chief belligerents. Then came the thrill of the great crisis, when the old Emperor in Berlin was breathing his last, and no one knew whether his voiceless heir would ever be able to leave that soft Italian shore, and face the snows and sternness of his rugged country. With what breathless interest we waited for the bulletin from morning to morning! nothing else regarded or thought of. If the interest was higher in Germany, in his own country, ours assuredly was next. And then the journey in the blighting cold through the snow! Many of us were angry, as if at an unexpected blow from a friend, when the Italian king made an unguarded exclamation of dismay at the sight of the altered face. We would not have him die,—we would have a miraculous recovery, in face of all the need he had to live, and the strenuous call upon him. And with what an ache of feeling, something more than mere sympathy, we watched and saw his sun go down! All this has been more interesting, more touching, than any tragedy to our hearts. A man whose presence all the world could realise; a brave strong man, who said nothing, who made no complaint, but did his duty, and accepted his burden to the very end! A man more bitterly disappointed than ever man was — balked in everything—unable to do, save for a flickering unstable minute, any of the things he had for years desired to do, or to secure that they should be done after him, or that Germany should ever be the better that he had been. This, in the sight of men and angels, Frederick of Prussia endured: yet never lost patience, nor the self-

command of a disciplined and dutiful soul.

Such is the Emperor's history,—that of a life simple, pure, and unobtrusive, so far as his position permitted, marked chiefly on its ordinary levels by a continued strain of self-abnegation, but quickening now and then into the heroic, and ascending by moments to the very height of mortal achievement,—a lesson not for kings only, but for all men. The second in his own country, a prominent figure wherever he moved, he was yet subject almost all his life to contradiction and repression such as few lesser men of full age have to encounter, and bore himself with perfect dignity throughout all the exasperations of such a discipline. His chief trials, strangely enough at that high level, were not the special trials of power, but of the reverse of power,—the impotence which we all have to experience in the face of circumstances swayed by other wills, the pains of submission to what we cannot approve, and the always difficult task of refraining even from good words. If his behaviour in such a position is a model to men occupying his own very difficult and delicate place, it is also one which should come home to the simplest and the humblest. To be strong, yet submit, is more hard than to submit, being weak. Self-sacrifice, in common parlance, is often an equivocal virtue; it is well for the race sometimes to see what the self-sacrifice of a great nature in the greatest circumstances can be.

But this exceedingly impressive position gains greatly in moral force from the glimpse afforded us of one moment in his life, when the Crown Prince ceased to subdue his own instincts and convictions. The Diary[1] so much fought over in Germany is much more striking and significant than the chastened biography of Mr Rodd, and there seems no substantial reason for doubting its authenticity. The singular revelation it makes of the firmness and determined resolution with which the Crown Prince pushed on the final settlement of the new German Empire—abandoning for once his passive *rôle*, and claiming as the representative of the future an authoritative voice and an initiative of his own—has taken the world by surprise. It shows us not only the action of the moment, but how the gradual growth of the sentiment of that United Germany, a national ideal—"the long-deferred hopes of our forefathers, the dreams of German poets"—had come at length to be an enthusiasm in the minds of the younger princes, and especially in that of him to whom the task of its development was, as he hoped, to be confided. The moment had arrived for the carrying out of that great idea, and for once he who was the embodiment of the future, the leader of the rising life, would not be silenced or put aside. Always full of affection and respect for the King and Kaiser, who on his side had evidently all an old man's doubts as to the success of such an undertaking, and reluctance to embark upon any course in which there was the suspicion of a possible failure, the heir of empire could not consent to put aside those high hopes for himself and his race. It is evident that he was as little dis-

[1] The Emperor's Diary of the Austro-German War, 1866, and the Franco-German War, 1870-71. to which is added Prince Bismarck's Rejoinder. Edited by Henry W. Lucy. London: George Routledge & Sons.

posed to put up with any dallying on the subject as if he had been the sternest man of blood or iron. His determination that "the kings" should not baffle him—that they should be made to feel the risk of opposing a Power which was their master, and to understand that no repugnance or hesitation on their part could be allowed to balk the great scheme—makes it clear with the most satisfactory force that no weakness lay behind the perfect self-restraint and chivalrous courtesy which were so well known. There might even be something a little high-handed in the final determination to ride over any such scruples, were they put forth — a proceeding which Prince Bismarck, in his superior delicacy, considers impossible to have been harboured by any one, his own methods being so much more gentlemanly. But the Prince, it was evident, accepted the responsibility with no such exquisite alarms. The moment had come, the time was ripe, and the great thing had to be done.

This wonderful circumstance, however, throws the most curious side-light upon the events of that terrible and critical period. In those halls of Versailles, within hearing of the guns that roared with all their hoarse throats against Paris, at a moment when the eyes of the world were fixed upon the agony of France and the fate that awaited her, the discussions and consultations which were going on were not of France at all, save in a quite secondary place, but of a much more intricate matter—the consolidation of Germany, and the advantage given by the enthusiasms of victory for the accomplishment of that long-cherished design. France was, to the minds of these princes and statesmen, not so much a dangerous foe subdued, as the occasion of a fundamental but peaceful revolution among themselves. There is, indeed, wonderfully little question of France at all, even when she lies under the feet of the conquerors. Something much more momentous than either conquest or indemnity was in their minds. It was no pleasure to the Crown Prince to place his heel upon the neck of the fallen foe, but it was a stepping-stone to the larger and greater event which he had for so long set before him. The six milliards are as nothing, and even Alsace and Lorraine trifling incidents, in comparison with "the world-historic opportunity" which the house of Hohenzollern could not and would not fail to take advantage of. We are not sure that this curious and novel suggestion does not add a deeper humiliation to the downfall of the beaten country, not even accorded the dignity of being beaten for her own sake, but because her overthrow and her spoils afforded that lever which was to upheave Germany. But it is a wonderful example of that all-calculating German idiosyncrasy which wades through blood and every tragic accessory to the completion of its own designs, the life and death of nations or of men being but circumstances in its plan; which counts everything as secondary save the deep-lying ever-present scheme at length evolved by their means. No doubt the armies fought, the country gave up its sons and its treasure, to silence once and for all, if possible, the continually threatening invader on its border; but it is strange to realise that the younger princes, and especially the Crown Prince of Prussia, was scarcely thinking of France at all, but of how to strike for the Empire and German unity while the iron was

hot, and to secure a great political object over their foe's humiliated head.

But what an atmosphere of intellectual activity, of plan and purpose, breathes out of the daily records of this tremendous period! It is full of the strong thinkings of a man ordinarily reticent, in whom a great and splendid anticipation, the sense of a great work before him to do, is filling every vein. Every entry is instinct with this confidence and high resolution. Nothing unfilial was in that prospect. It was in the minds of all. "My son," says the new, but old, Emperor, "is devoted to the new state of things with his whole soul. He and his successors will be called to make the Empire now established a reality." And the heart of the Prince swelled to reach that noble enterprise. He felt that all his trials, the "important resolutions which he had been called upon to make between the ages of thirty and forty," had not been in vain. "I shrink from no difficulties," he says, "and am conscious that I do not want for steady courage fearlessly and perseveringly to face the work that is awaiting me." It is with a certain awe that the reader contemplates these great and solemn yet buoyant anticipations. Alas! the work that awaited him was very different from that to which he looked forward. And when the veil is thus lifted, and we see how strongly his mind was set upon that imperial work, — how warmly he realised the hope that it would be his to form and guide the new system, — the pang of sympathy with which we feel the strong man's deep disappointment is mingled with an ever-growing admiration for the indomitable soul which learned to relinquish as bravely as he had intended to carry out.

These openings-out of a strong and vigorous mind escaping from the enforced reserve of circumstances give exceeding interest to the fragments of the Diary, and it is easy to understand the indignant indiscretion of the friend who suffered them to glide into publicity. We can only wonder at the strange want of judgment, the occasional folly-fit to which the most astute are subject, which emphasised every complaint by interfering with their publication. It is not to be expected that every lover and servant of Frederick should be self-restrained like him, and the impulse always to repress has an uneasy and conscious look, as if there must be much to conceal.

Gentler thoughts, however, mingle with the records of the wars and struggles in which the Crown Prince took so great a part. He had been compelled to leave home for the war in 1866 while one of his children lay dying. And the first extract from the Diary contains an account of the battle of Königgratz, the first in which the Prince commanded after that painful parting. The conqueror relates the movements of the army, the heart-sickening spectacle of the battle-field with its heaps of dead, the anxiety yet growing conviction of success, until at last he reaches a height where he can survey the whole extent of the field, "a line of more than a dozen miles, and perceive with certainty that the victory was ours, and the enemy in full retreat." After a moment of awed yet ecstatic "prayers of gratitude," and greetings between the victors, he continues:—

My thoughts were now with my wife, my children, my mother and

sister. The thought of our little son Sigismund who has gone to his rest came into my mind, as if his death had been destined to be the precursor of a great event in my life. But *victories do not compensate for the loss of a child:* indeed piercing grief only makes itself all the more terribly felt under the influence of such powerful impressions."

How often in other scenes, among other triumphs, has the recollection of the little dead child, the loss for which no victory compensates, filled the eyes and swelled the heart of orator or artist with a dull realisation of the vanity of human successes! It is one of the sensations which make all men brothers, to see the victorious general pause on the crest of the hill, and think of his little son while his eye follows the flight of the broken regiments. And yet how mingled are human actions! For the war with Austria was entirely political—a war of ambition; and many a father's son lay motionless upon that field over which the Prince looked, sadly thinking of his infant dead. He himself, however, though fighting strongly on his own side, as his country and the policy of its rulers required, was never callous to those terrible results of war. "War," he says, "is really something dreadful; and those who create it with a stroke of the pen, sitting at a green-cloth table, little dream what horrors they are conjuring up." His support was always upon the merciful side. He was opposed to the bombardment of Paris, and interfered to prevent additional humiliation to the French Emperor at the time of his surrender. And it gave him pleasure to think that in this respect his feelings were understood and appreciated in France. "My dislike for this bloody work," he says, "is well known; indeed they say of me, as I learn to my secret joy, that whenever it is consistent with strict fulfilment of duty, I allow forbearance and mildness as much as possible to prevail."

Some of the Crown Prince's utterances on the subject of the great German union which he had so strenuously worked to bring about are also very worthy of attention. There is, immediately after the proclamation of the Emperor, a question about his own title, as to which he is indifferent, though disliking the word "Imperial."

"But that is a secondary matter compared with its inner meaning. I feel myself to be only a German, knowing no difference between Bavarian, Badener, and all the other inhabitants of our thirty-three minor fatherlands. I will on no account interfere with their internal affairs, or seek to deprive them of their peculiarities. Oh that all Germans would look upon me and my wife as their own, and not as North German intruders!"

He adds a little later:—

"Even the greatest imprudence can no longer undo what has been attained. Such experiences as I have collected during the past ten years cannot have been won in vain. In the nation united at last I shall find a strong support for my ideas: more especially I shall be the first prince who has to appear before his people after having honourably declared for constitutional measures without any reserve. . . . As far as moral earnestness and political conviction are concerned, they can only be the result of inward ripeness and inward struggles which have to be daily renewed, and which one must fight out alone. And when I see that my efforts for the oppressed are recognised in Germany and by her neighbours in such a way that confidence is felt in my future, that makes me happy."

We can only add, after the high

purpose and noble looking forward of these anticipations, so well founded, so apparently certain, the sigh of human futility—alas for the great reign that was never to be!

The Emperor Frederick has been more hardly treated by circumstances, by fate, by friends, and by foes, than any prominent personage of his time. Were it not that God holds all reserves and compensations in His hand, and that we cannot believe in the loss of any such nobly developed powers and qualities, we should be tempted to say he had been ill treated by Providence — which, indeed, according to our parlance he has—being held aside from his career by a hand no other than that of the Supreme, and balked and disappointed in all his greatest plans and aspirations. Knowing so little as we do of these secret laws, there is no irreverence in saying this; though already in our knowledge the world has been the gainer, by a chapter of history more touching and memorable, and a revelation of human character more high and pure and unrewarded, than the lives of a dozen fortunate emperors could have afforded. For human nature appreciates above all things that last crown of perfection—that it shall be without reward. The greatest of human heroes are those who have served God for nought:

> "To that 'man,' when he has done all,
> Yet will I add an honour"—

that he should have nothing in return. And with this the Emperor's friends and lovers must remain satisfied, he himself, let us not doubt, having already entered into work more noble than any he could dream of. But neither his friends nor his foes have spared him. The babble of tongues about his sick-bed has violated all the sanctities of nature. Had all the doctors been hanged on one rope, it would have been a fit reward for their odious conduct: as if their petty *amour propre* could matter in face of such a spectacle. Had they desired to bring into more prominent and glorious comparison the example of his royal silence, his all-enduring calm, they could not have taken a better method. It is to be hoped that now, until the time comes for a perfect and impartial history, these voices will be silent; and the spotless name of the Emperor left with all its noble suggestions for the instruction and example of the world.

ENGLISH FARMERS.

THE word "farmer" is a much more comprehensive one at the present day than it used to be in former times. It was once applied almost exclusively to the class of men whom, according to its derivation, it properly denotes—those, that is, who till hired ground, as distinct from the yeoman, or, later on, the gentleman farmer, who till their own. Within the last generation, however, the love of agriculture has spread so widely among all classes, that tenant-farmers may now be found in every rank of society. Yet even now, the word, taken simply by itself, without any differentiating term, is usually held to signify one who stands below the line conventionally supposed to separate the "table-land of gentility," as Mr Oldbuck calls it, from all beneath. That is the sense in which I propose to use it in the present article. Distinctions of this nature are always more or less invidious; nor should I have mentioned them at all, but for the necessity of making perfectly clear to what manner of man I was referring. Not to pursue this question any further, it is obvious that among agriculturists in general, whether amateurs or professionals, the line of demarcation is a very irregular and devious one; and I shall content myself with saying that in writing of the manners, the prejudices, the habits, the vices and virtues of this particular class, whether yeomen or tenants, I am throughout referring to men who have not, as a rule, received a liberal education, and who do not, or did not till within the last thirty years, think of copying the manners and customs pertaining to the class above them.

I say this with the less hesitation, because it will rather be to what are called "farmers of the old school" that I shall direct attention, affording, as they do, the most strongly marked types of the genus to which they belong, and illustrating most clearly that old tripartite division of rural life which I believe is peculiar to this country, and which, with some inconveniences, has hitherto worked most beneficially. But whether dealing with the old style or new, I shall be thinking chiefly of the man who occupies a middle position between the peasant farmer and the gentleman farmer, or the tenant who is socially his equal; neither of these two extremes being equally characteristic of England, or exhibiting in the same perfection the traits on which I love to look back. There are peasant farmers and gentlemen farmers everywhere. But the man I have in my eye is only to be found at home.

My own recollections go back to a time when there were still a good many farmers left who lived quite *more majorum* — dined in their kitchens, drank nothing but ale, and were only just beginning to take to black coats on Sunday. One such man I can remember well, who has indeed not been dead for more than ten or twelve years. But then he was the sole surviving specimen in the neighbourhood where he lived of a class which had been long extinct, and was pointed out by other farmers as a social curiosity. But he was a warm man, had a large balance at his bankers, and kept his farm (about 300 acres) in excellent condition, albeit little indebted to

science or machinery. He was a kind of king on market-days, for whatever he bought he would always have the best, and never haggled at the price. If you called upon him, he received you in the kitchen, and a jug of home-brewed —that incomparable luxury which has almost disappeared before the march of refinement—was placed upon the table, with no apology for not offering wine. He never missed church, and could always be relied upon when money was wanted for any charitable or religious purpose. He, we may be sure, was never behind-hand with his rent, nor ever asked for a reduction. His farm was a sufficient occupation for him. He neither shot nor hunted, though he had opportunities of doing both. He had no books: and though not possessed of high spirits or a man of many words, was always cheerful, always sober, and always ceremoniously respectful to those whom he recognised as his betters. When he died, it was found that he had amassed money; and though he lived into the bad times, he did not seem to have suffered from them.

Another of the same kind, whom I remember still better, was a somewhat crabbed and gnarled old fellow, but thoroughly sound at core. I can just recollect him at church, dressed a good deal like Mr Poyser—the same drab coat and breeches, and the same richly flowered waistcoat. These, however, disappeared in my early childhood, about the same time as the village stocks and the parish clerk's top-boots, and gave way to the broad-skirted black garment which remained his Sunday attire to his death. The sons of such men were then wearing swallow-tailed coats, generally dark-green or brown, with brass buttons. But the fathers remained faithful to the old style, and I think, as far as personal appearance went, they had the best of it. Old Master Woollem, as he was always called—his real name was Woolcome—was a man of saturnine temperament, disliked rather by us boys because he objected to our getting over his fences, or prowling about his farmyard and out-houses, bird-nesting or sparrow-catching; but a stanch friend to the parson, an excellent master, and liberal in his charities. The parson's wife he always addressed as "madam," and sent her a couple of fowls every Christmas, the finest and fattest which his poultry-yard could produce, "with his duty." He was even more strict in his devotion to old farming ideas than the other old gentleman I have mentioned. He had been brought up at a time when farmers or their wives and daughters went off to market in the winter time while it was still dark, transacted their business by candle-light, and were home again by dinner-time. To the last he did not like to see his daughters doing any ornamental work, reading any light literature, or exhibiting the faintest approach to any little finery in their dress. If he detected anything of the kind, he generally remained quite silent, but those who knew him knew well what he meant. Sometimes he refused food—literally, like David, turning his face to the wall and eating no bread. The last authenticated instance of his declining to eat his dinner was on his suddenly discovering that his eldest son had been guilty of a breach of all the family traditions by going out with the hounds. The young man did not appear at table. The new spurs were missing from their accustomed hook over the fireplace. The old man remembered that the hounds had met in

the neighbourhood that morning. The bitter truth flashed upon him in a moment. "My lord's gone a-hunting," he exclaimed to his wife, with suppressed emotion, "and you knowed to it." This last reflection was too much for him, and, drawing his chair away to the chimney-corner, he refused to be comforted. His silence on these occasions was more terrible than words: he moved about the house and premises wrapped in the deepest gloom: and during one of these fits of dejection, his youngest daughter, a nice-looking girl of nineteen, was driven in despair to tuck up her sleeves, go down upon her knees, and scrub the kitchen-floor till her arms ached, as the only means of recalling him to more cheerful views of existence. Propitiated by this act of homage to the spirit of a better age and the deities of his own youth, old Master Woollem is said to have actually smiled, and harmony was once more restored to the domestic circle.

In spite of these little peculiarities, Woolcome was a man of great natural shrewdness and general intelligence, was never loud or noisy in his talk and knew "how to conduct himself," and what kind of language to use, in whatever society he was thrown. All farmers of his class did not quite know this; but all whom I can remember had one stock phrase which always used to amuse us, at a time when, I suppose, one was more easily amused than now, and it was this. When they dined at our house, and were asked if they would take another slice of the joint, they always if they wanted no more, replied in the same set words,—"No more, thank'ee, sir, this turn." Old Woollem said this as well as the others; but he would not have said the gross things which some of them uttered quite innocently concerning their flocks and herds, nor yet the really simple or really racy things which I have heard from others, indicating no doubt some confusion of ideas, but all the more interesting on that account to students of the laws of thought.

I recollect a great, big, burly fellow, six feet high, and younger than either of the above, who, when asked his age, could only refer the questioner to his landlord. "I'm three years younger nor Sir Richard," he would say; "I allers wos." This was conclusive in his eyes. I once saw this man trembling on the verge of scepticism in consequence of the inexplicable behaviour of the elements. That a heavy flood should have come on the day after he had brought down his sheep from the uplands, and turned them into the meadows, was more than he could reconcile with the theory of a moral governor of the universe. It seemed very odd, he said; and I left him leaning on a gate, struggling very hard to vindicate the ways of God to man, but evidently without success. This man ultimately hanged himself in the stable—whether distracted by the difficulties surrounding the origin of evil, or vexed, as the neighbours thought, at being cheated out of the price of a calf, I have never fully understood.

These were all men of the old leaven—men who, if not free from the vices and deficiencies common to the middle classes in general, possessed at least some negative virtues peculiar to themselves. They were neither luxurious nor ostentatious; were content to live after the manner of their forefathers, and had no desire to be anything but what they were. Their only vehicle was the old

"shay-cart"; and very few of them hunted, unless they were breeders of, or dealers in, horses, and did it professionally. They farmed well according to the fashion of the age, and had no other ambition. They lived very plainly, not to say hardly—by no means thinking it necessary to eat butcher's meat every day. I knew a thriving farmer, renting two hundred acres—which, in the midland counties, is considered a good-sized farm—and keeping forty cows, who sat down with his family every Sunday to a large batter-pudding made in a puncheon, with a piece of bacon in the middle, which they ate cold for dinner during the remainder of the week. The cost of living to farmers of this class was a mere trifle. They bought scarcely anything. Milk, butter, cheese, bacon, eggs, poultry, pork, and vegetables, they got at cost price off their own land. They brewed their own beer and baked their own bread. Families who lived much better than those who assembled round the puncheon—our friend Woollem, for instance—couldn't have spent more than three hundred a-year, and I don't suppose he spent that. Suppose his farm was three hundred acres, and that he paid £2 an acre for it all round: according to the common calculation in those days,[1] his land would yield him three rents—one for his landlord, one for his labour, and one for himself. That would give him £600 a-year for his own share. I believe that, if anything, I am under the mark, for some said the tenant should make four rents, one to put by, besides what I have mentioned. But allowing the first calculation to be correct, a thrifty man, in the days I am thinking of, would have saved between three and four hundred a-year; and this very old man we have been talking about—Woolcome—did actually die worth £20,000, besides the value of his stock, having had the farm for forty years. This was the generation that made money; the next was the generation that spent it; the present is the one that wants it.

There have, of course, always been, coexistent with the above class of farmers, a higher and a lower class. The farmer who rented, maybe, seven or eight hundred acres, and had land of his own besides, though not perhaps a gentleman any more than the men I have described, was a man of different tastes and habits, hunted and shot, and sometimes went to the seaside. On the other hand, the smaller man with thirty, fifty, or seventy acres, was little more than a peasant. But I think the class which came between the two was, as I have already said, the most truly representative; and this is the class, I am afraid, on whom "time and fate" have laid the heaviest hand. But they could not, under any circumstances, have remained as they were forty years ago. The march of intellect must have gone over them, flattening down their characteristic oddities and removing their moss-grown prejudices, even had no agricultural depression threatened to extinguish them. Such men may doubtless still be found in the remoter nooks and corners of the country, in sheltered situations, as De Quincey says. I have heard that they survive in Devonshire;

[1] Not in these. See a most interesting paper read by Major Craigie before the Farmers' Club in London on the 10th of last month, on "The Farmers' Labour Bill."

but I am told that they are fast disappearing from the great agricultural counties in the central and eastern parts of England. But were the present writer to outlive them all, he could never forget them—their kindly, hearty ways, their homely politeness, their hospitality, their mellow ale and their pork-pies, produced, generally speaking, on coursing days, that being a sport in which the most scrupulous of them thought it no presumption to indulge.

"Saturnia regna, valete."

If another golden age is in store for us, I at all events shall not be here to see it.

Between the smaller yeoman and the tenant-farmer such as I have described him, there was never much to choose in point of intelligence, education, or refinement. The small freeholders once upon a time, perhaps, were a valuable political element in rural society, and to some extent they are so still. But everybody in the country is tolerably independent now, and the old-fashioned yeoman, with his many real and many imputed virtues, mingled so large an infusion of more questionable qualities, that I know not whether *his* gradual disappearance is altogether to be regretted. Not that he has disappeared yet, by any means. People ask, said Lord Beaconsfield, where the Buckinghamshire freeholders are now? "Why, where you would expect to find them — in Buckinghamshire, to be sure." And it is a great mistake to suppose that the class of small proprietors has either vanished or is likely to vanish very soon. They are not subject to the same disturbing causes as the tenant-farmer. The owner may farm as badly as he pleases, exhaust his land, allow his house, his farm-buildings, and his fences to go to rack and ruin; but as long as he can scrape enough from the soil to pay the interest on his mortgage and keep body and soul together, there is nobody to move him on. As we know, he clings tenaciously to the ground and the result is that he is still there when many better men than himself have been obliged to go. His time will come, as it would assuredly come, in the third or fourth generation, to any new class of peasant-proprietors. But he is not yet a thing of the past, and is still to be seen, in a state of nature, in all the English counties that I am acquainted with. I may here add that, according to the latest agricultural returns, of the thirty-two million seven hundred thousand acres of which England consists, very nearly five millions are farmed by their owners.

The peasant-proprietor was and is simply what his name implies. It was and is the yeoman of two or three hundred acres in whom the special attributes of his class are seen to the greatest perfection. In a country village of the olden time, such a man was under no moral restraint at all. There was no public opinion, and if there had been, he would not have cared about it. If none of the gentry happened to reside in the neighbourhood, he was a little king—as irresponsible and despotic as a Turkish pasha. A good type of the class has been given us by George Eliot in Squire Cass. He was a little above the yeoman class in point of property. But his character was exactly theirs. Such men, generally speaking, did not, and do not, set a good example to the neighbourhood. They were, as a rule, scrupulously honest, liberal, and hospitable. But as for temperance, soberness, and

chastity, they might be whistled down the wind. Twenty years ago they were still very much what the smallest class of squires had been a hundred and fifty years before. There were good men and moral men among them then, and probably there are more now. But their absolute freedom from the corrective influence of all outside opinion; their ignorance and self-importance; their well-filled pockets, and their limited range of interests—betrayed too many of them into the same mode of living as Tony Lumpkin promised himself when he should "come to his own."

Even the most old-fashioned farmers whom I can recollect had given up the practice of dining with their labourers. They no longer sat at the head of the long oak-table and carved the bacon, as Cobbett remembered them doing; and even in his day the process of transformation had begun. In 1825 he wrote as follows:—

"When the old farm-houses are down (and down they must come in time), what a miserable thing the country will be! Those that are now erected are mere painted shells, with a mistress within who is stuck up in a place she calls the *parlour*, with, if she have children, the 'young ladies and gentlemen' about her; some showy chairs and a sofa (a *sofa* by all means); half-a-dozen prints in gilt frames hanging up; some swinging book-shelves with novels and tracts upon them; a dinner brought in by a girl that is perhaps better 'educated' than she; two or three nick-nacks to eat instead of a piece of bacon and a pudding; the house too neat for a dirty-shoed carter to be allowed to come into; and everything proclaiming to every sensible beholder that there is here a constant anxiety to make a *show* not warranted by the reality. The children (which is the worst part of it) are all too clever to *work;* they are all to be *gentlefolks*. Go to plough! Good God! What! 'young gentlemen' go to plough! They become *clerks*, or some skimming-dish thing or other. They flee from the dirty *work* as cunning horses do from the bridle. What misery is all this! What a mass of materials for proclaiming that general and *dreadful convulsion* that must, first or last, come and blow this funding and jobbing and enslaving and starving system to atoms!"[1]

Cobbett was riding through the home counties when he wrote this, and sixty years ago the change had hardly spread a great deal farther. Still this was the beginning of it, and we likewise read on the same page—

"There was no reason to expect that farmers would not endeavour to keep pace, in point of show and luxury, with fund-holders, and with all the tribe that *war* and *taxes* created. Farmers were not the authors of the mischief. And *now* they are compelled to shut the labourers out of their houses, and to pinch them in their wages in order to be able to pay their own taxes; and besides this, the manners and the principles of the working class are so changed, that a sort of self-preservation bids the farmer (especially in some counties) to keep them from beneath his roof."[2]

The distress among the peasantry which caused this last sentence to be written passed away in time. But the change in the farmers went on, and in the course of another generation produced the new race of whose style of living we have heard so much since the agricultural depression set in. Cobbett's picture, which I have here quoted, represents the change under its most ridiculous aspect; and as events have turned out, it proved an unfortunate one for the farmers. Had they continued to

[1] Rural Rides and Drives, p. 274.

[2] Ibid.

live in the old style during what have been called the good times—that is to say, roughly speaking, from about 1835 to 1875—they might have been in a very different position now. It took nearly twenty years for things to settle down again after the peace of 1815; but as soon as the farmers had got over the monetary convulsions of the Regency and the reign of George IV., a period of great prosperity followed, and it was the younger generation of farmers, who grew up to manhood about the middle of the present century, with whom the luxuries and elegancies so severely censured by a somewhat inconsiderate class of critics originated. I cannot altogether join in these reproaches. The smart dog-cart, the well-bred hunter, the claret, the piano, the governess, the silk dresses, and the last new novel, were not reprehensible in themselves. There is no reason why men should not have these things, simply because they are agriculturists; and if the farmers fell into the error of supposing that their good fortune would last for ever, and that there was no necessity to make provision for a rainy day, they only did what many other people of various occupations and pursuits in life are guilty of doing every hour, without drawing down upon themselves any marked sarcasm or censure. It might be said, perhaps, that all classes in England have been living too expensively during the last fifty years, and that country gentlemen are paying the penalty of their imprudence as well as their tenants.

The tenant-farmer of the new style has been so often described, that it is unnecessary to paint him over again in any detail. He "set up for a gentleman," as the labourers used to say, and played the part with varying propriety, according to his natural tact and taste, and the kind of education he had received. The degree in which he succeeded in raising himself towards the level of the class above him would depend to some extent, of course, on the character of the neighbourhood in which he lived, and the number and quality of the gentry who took the lead in it. But it would be a mistake to suppose that all the young farmers who, five-and-thirty or forty years ago, began to ride valuable horses, drink expensive wines, and smoke choice cigars, did so with the view of making themselves more like gentlemen. The majority of them, I think, had too much sense for that. They had these things because they were good in themselves, and they saw no reason for hoarding their money instead of spending it. But of that social ambition which is said to agitate mercantile and commercial circles, I have never myself seen much evidence among the farmers. They were quite contented, I think, with the society of their own class, and acquiesced in existing distinctions not only without any irritation, but without the slightest desire to rebel against them. In one particular this was very marked. Let us go to the cover-side and take a glance at the assembled sportsmen. There is the gentleman on his handsome hunter, with perfect appointments; his boots and buckskins, his scarlet coat, his tie, his pin, all exactly as they ought to be. Talking to him is a good-looking young man, nearly if not quite as well mounted as himself, and nearly if not quite as well dressed. He is quite as good a rider, and the fox to-day will in all probability be found upon his own farm. But there is a line

drawn between them which the latter knows to be impassable. He cannot wear a red coat. He would like to wear one, and would no doubt look very well in one. But he knows perfectly well that "it wouldn't do,"—that it would only make him look ridiculous; and he never frets or chafes for a moment under a dispensation which seems to him like a natural law. Similarly, I don't believe that such men have ever pined for admittance into what is called "county society," either for themselves, their wives, or their daughters. In the days of their prosperity they gave each other dinners, played at loo or *vingt-et-un* afterwards, and invited the local doctor, solicitor, or law agent, to be one of the party. With this they were perfectly satisfied; and when we hear this class of men accused of having aped a style of living unsuitable to their position, and of having given themselves airs for which now they have to pay the piper, we must remember, after all, that in the majority of instances they only intended to enjoy themselves, and were not chargeable, as a rule, with any contemptible eagerness to thrust themselves into a higher class. When the rustic said of such a man that he was "setting up for a gentleman," he was sarcastic, and meant that he would have done much better to spend less upon himself, and more upon his land and his labourers' wages. He did not necessarily mean that the culprit was looking forward to an invitation to dinner from the Duke, or an alliance with his landlord's daughter.

We are now speaking of men whose fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers had been farmers before them—men who were thoroughly imbued with all the traditions of their class, and perfectly satisfied with the social conditions which surrounded them. But of course there were others. The system of farming-pupils has something perhaps to answer for. It used to be said that the fool of the family was sent into the army. That is not the case now, if it ever was. But though I do not mean to say that parents often resolved to make the fool of the family a farmer, I think they sometimes fancied that a boy who either could or would do nothing else, might be bribed to work a little at farming by the prospect which it afforded him of good living, an out-of-door life, and plenty of field-sports. Nine times out of ten the lad took all the fun and shirked all the work, and was probably no very good companion for the young farmers in the neighbourhood. They acquired expensive tastes and idle habits from *him*; while his agricultural tutor, who received an ample fee with him, made it a point of honour to keep what was called "a liberal table," and to indulge in luxuries which, if left to himself, he would have thought beyond his station. The farmer's wife was specially fond of this system; for if she had daughters, the pupil would naturally take one of them off her hands, and she in turn would send others to do the same kind office for her sisters.

Occasionally such families got rather a bad reputation in the neighbourhood, and the labourers would tell you with a grin how young So-and-so "got zucked in" by Farmer Plant's lady at the Grange. "Be you a-gooing to stay there?" perhaps he would add; and if you answered in the affirmative, would grin a little wider. If you asked him what he meant, he would only say, "Well, you'll 'ev to be smart like." The pupil busi-

ness, however, is now said to be played out.[1] Men don't send their sons, even the idle ones, to learn a losing trade at a large cost; and what is gradually becoming of the tutorial farmers, with their horses and guns, their elegant daughters and their late dinners, I do not profess to understand. Some still remain, I suppose, but vacant farms and empty farm-houses, and gardens overgrown with weeds, and kennels and stables going to ruin, tell too plainly that their day is over; and that the age of pleasure-farming —of work and play combined in very unequal proportions—is gone for ever.

One is very sorry for individuals; but I am not sure that the catastrophe which has overtaken them is an unmixed evil. There was something artificial in the social efflorescence of the agricultural class during what has been called the champagne age. I have already pointed out that much of the sarcasm to which farmers have been exposed, in consequence of the tastes and habits then acquired, is undeserved; that, in fact, they have not been worse than other people. But at the same time, their prosperity depended upon two conditions, one of which was always precarious, while it might have been seen that the other was in the nature of things only temporary—I mean, the existence of Protection and the absence of competition. The withdrawal of the one, followed at no long interval by the extension of the other, has produced its logical results. Some say that protection, in some shape or another, is sure to be revived; others that, in less than another generation, American competition, at all events, will cease to be formidable. But it can hardly help occurring to any impartial looker-on that it would be better for all parties if English agriculture could be placed on such a footing as would make it independent of either. This is what I should call a natural and healthy footing. I am not writing either as a political economist or a scientific agriculturist; but I think common-sense is enough to teach us this, that if the style of living adopted by a numerous class of English farmers during the second half of the nineteenth century requires to be supported by laws to which a large part of the nation would always be hostile, and is incompatible with that foreign competition which, though it may possibly subside at some remote period, must continue to confront us for very many years to come, the sooner it is exchanged for a system that can dispense with such supports the better.

Of the actual economical position of the English farmer at the present moment, it is impossible to procure the details with sufficient accuracy to warrant any lengthened description. It seems to be generally admitted that he can no longer continue to live in the style to which he has lately grown accustomed; and the great question is, whether he can continue to live at all upon the land, even if he returns to that simpler and more frugal mode of life which prevailed at a much earlier period. On the answer to this question it depends whether the tenant-farmer is still to continue a conspicuous and important member of the village community, a link between the gentry and the peasantry, of which the value in past times has been incalculable;

[1] See an excellent article in the 'St James's Gazette,' October 26th.

or whether he is gradually to fade out of the system, leaving the land to the aristocracy and the peasantry, to be cultivated either on a larger scale by the former, or on a smaller scale by the latter.

After the many changes which our old rural life has already undergone, and in view of the many more which it yet seems doomed to undergo, the disappearance of the middle-class tenant-farmer from among the constituent elements of rural society cannot, I fear, be regarded as impossible. But I confess I do not think it probable. It does not seem to me that the wholesale substitution of petty culture, whether by the hands of owners or occupiers, for our existing agricultural system, leaving no intermediate link between the peasantry and the gentry, is within measurable distance. An American agriculturist said to me but a few months ago,—"Why, put down an American farmer on two hundred acres of clay land in your Cambridgeshire or Essex, at a pound an acre, and he would not only make a living out of it—he would grow rich upon it." And I think it has certainly not yet been proved that if the occupier of two or three hundred acres returned to the style of living which was universal among men of his class in the reign of George II., and till the middle of the reign of George III., they could not live upon the land. The style of living among the gentry must be altered too: the two classes must lower their expenditure together. Rents must be different. Eight thousand a-year must come back to five, and five thousand a-year to three. And though I do not presume to speak with confidence of the result, yet I think it will be owned that the experiment has not yet been tried, and that it is worth a trial. Rents, of course, have in numerous instances been remitted or reduced. But the process will have to be carried further yet; and country gentlemen must make up their minds to a permanently different mode of life, if the old distribution of classes is to remain intact. In that case, I think, with a homelier and less showy class of tenantry, and a class of gentry retaining all their culture, while parting with many of their luxuries, country life might still be conducted on the old model, in spite of county councils—which, it is hoped, will disappoint the Radicals—and other plausible nostrums, which they might perhaps turn to better account.

That it may be so, I for one most heartily and earnestly desire. Let us try to picture to ourselves an England from which the tenant-farmers—not only the Woolcomes and their like, but their modern representatives—had disappeared. Let us try to think of English villages in which the half-dozen substantial farmhouses, with the comfortable farmyards, barns, and ricks, were no longer to be seen; of the village church, from which the old well-known figures of Farmer Giles, and Farmer Goodman, and Farmer Whitehead, were gone for ever. None but those who know what an English village of the old stamp really is, will perhaps fully appreciate all that these words imply. In the first place, they mean the loss of a body of men who have hitherto taken a large share in the administration of local affairs, and for whom it would be difficult to find efficient substitutes. If the present race of farmers vanish, and in their place we have only a multitude of petty cultivators, with a few very big agriculturists scattered about here and there—the plums at the top of

the pudding—who is to assist the gentry and the clergy in the conduct of country business? The electors, in the case we are supposing, will be obliged to choose the attorney and the shopkeeper from the nearest town, in default of anybody else with the requisite education and intelligence—men ignorant of rural matters, and of the real wants and true interests of the peasantry. More than that, parish affairs will have to be managed by somebody. Neither county councils nor district councils will do away with the necessity for that; and who is to manage them if there are no farmers in the parish above the rank of a peasant?

But the man who would miss the farmers most of all would be the clergyman. There are farmers sometimes who are Dissenters, and some who, as such, do all they can to thwart the parson. But, as a general rule, the principal farmers in the parish are the clergyman's most efficient helpers. They are independent men, and speak their minds about ritualism, or anything else which offends them, with perfect freedom. But a man of this kind is often the clergyman's right-hand man for all that, subscribes liberally to the school, looks after the Church-rate, and helps to keep up what is called "a good feeling" in the parish generally. He takes a good deal of parish business off the parson's hands, helps him in works of charity, carries coals for the poor at Christmas, and can often give useful advice and useful information, not otherwise easily procured, relating to the labourers and their families. In short, he does a great deal towards making it possible for gentlemen to exist upon their livings, with glebe and tithe in their present unsatisfactory condition. The farmer's wife is the best ally of the clergyman's wife. She helps in the village clothing-club, in the school and in the choir; and she, too, conveys a good deal of information to the parsonage, of which its inhabitants might have long remained in ignorance. That farmers of this class are able to help their own labourers in case of sickness or accident in a way which, to the man of fifty acres, would be impossible, "goes without saying." Finally, it may be added that the greater number of classes of which society consists, the greater its stability and steadiness, the greater room for the play of individual peculiarities, and the greater the security for the freedom and independence of minorities.

I don't think that any form of dissent has ever prevailed very largely among the English farmers. In the old days, when the Church was to some extent unmindful of her pastoral duties, dissent spread among the poor, because religion of some kind was necessary to them; and it is still. Those who go much among the London poor tell us that they cling to Christianity in some shape as the one great solace of their lot. And Methodism responded to a want which the Church at one time only very partially supplied. But it was scarcely felt by the farmers, with whom dissent usually originated in a spirit of opposition, or a desire to spite somebody. If, according to our elegant euphemism, "any unpleasantness" arose between a farmer and his landlord on the question of tithes or rabbits, he would take to going to chapel as the only way of paying him out. If the clergyman admonished him, or wounded the best feelings of his nature by thwarting him in the matter of pews—*belli teterrima causa* in country places—he did

the same thing. But I doubt if he was often led thither by the wants of his spiritual nature. Once there, however, things were made very agreeable to him. He was caressed and flattered, and found himself a great man; and so the secession, which began in pique, was prolonged by vanity, and the Dissenters gained a new convert. But I should very much question whether he ever felt any preference for the chapel over the church on purely religious grounds.

I think, however, it must be admitted that where a farmer of the old school had any theological bias at all, it was slightly in favour of the Evangelical party. As a general rule, it did not occur to him to have any views at all upon such subjects. But he liked now and then a sensational sermon, as we like sensational novels; and the mysterious imagery of the Old Testament, combined with its intense human interest, had the same charm for him as it has for all people, I suppose, whose tastes have not been ruined by education. Now the Evangelical clergy, in the days I am thinking of, were strong upon the Pentateuch; and I remember one who was very popular with village congregations because of his knowledge of "the types." An old man being reminded of him the other day, by a friend of the writer, showed what an impression every particular had made upon him. "Ah, sir," he said, "he wur oncommon good upon the types, specially the red heifer." Whether the fact of his living in a grazing country had caused this particular display of hermeneutic science to come home to him with peculiar force or not, I don't know. But that was the one thing that he remembered.

There was, however, one religious feeling which burnt fiercely in the middle classes sixty years ago, and does still. The British farmer, in common with the whole body of the English middle class, had always been brought up in intense horror of Romanism. Down to 1829 he had leaned upon the Established Church as a sure and certain barrier against it, founded on a rock, and looked on Dissenters as men playing into the hands of Popery, by attempting to weaken the Church of England. The Roman Catholic Emancipation Act was not, as he knew, the fault of the English clergy. But they had been unable to prevent it; and *one* reason for his attachment to the National Church was gone. On the top of this rock of offence came the Tractarian movement, which woke his religious antipathies into new life, and wounded at the same time his religious conservatism. The levelling of the tall pews; the introduction of the surplice into the pulpit; the substitution of the harmonium or the organ for the fifes, flutes, trombones, and all kinds of music,[1] to which he had been accustomed from his childhood; the service on saints' days; the chanting, and the intoning,—were a severe shock to the farmer of sixty years of age, who had grown grey in the corner of his big pew, and whose dignity was hurt by being placed on a level with the common people. I have heard of such a man being taken suddenly ill, and obliged to leave the church, the first time he witnessed some of these startling innovations. Yet the great majority of them stood the strain very well, and remained faithful

[1] These are being gradually restored.

to the Church. And now a new generation has grown up familiar with the new system, and, I believe, partial to it. But undoubtedly, in the first instance, it furnished some recruits to Little Bethel. And even now the feeling of the farmers towards the Church, however friendly, is not exactly what it was. They support the Church because they themselves like her services, and understand the advantages of an Establishment. But I doubt if they still look upon her with that kind of unquestioning veneration which animated their forefathers, when she was accepted as an inseparable part of the whole constitution of the country, the removal of which would be a moral and political convulsion too vast for their understandings to embrace.

The tithe question, which has revived again in our day, is quite a separate one. If the pinch of poverty has made the farmer impatient of legal obligation, and anxious to appropriate property which belongs to somebody else, it is from no aversion either to the Church or the clergy. He is desperate, and all due allowance must be made for the excesses of desperation. I should be afraid, however, that if the tithe question is kept open much longer, it may tend more and more to familiarise the farmer with the idea of disestablishment—not out of hostility to the Church, but from an idea that everybody should be allowed to give what he likes. The farmers, of course, really give nothing, and the whole share of the produce of the soil to which they are entitled, they still receive. Tithe is no more "a gift" to the Church than rent is to the landlord. I believe the majority of the farmers see the truth through all their vexation and confusion, and that all they want is a proportionate reduction of tithe. But there is certainly a minority who are gradually fanning themselves into a feeling of opposition to the principle, and who are heard to say that they would pay twice as much as their tithe to support the Church of England, if she waved her claim to it of right.

I have little to add to what I have already said of the farmer's ideas about the land. He finds himself in a desperate predicament, and naturally looks round for somebody on whom he can throw the blame. He is hurt and angry, but is loath to be angry with himself. Like a wounded animal, he will turn upon his best friends. Here is no cause either for wonder or reproach. As he sees "his noble industry, the invention of gods and the occupation of heroes,"[1] rapidly giving way beneath his feet, we need not be surprised that he grows irritable, suspicious, and credulous; that he looks on the territorial system generally with a jaundiced eye; listens to the wildest nostrums, and clings vainly to the hope that, by some change of tenure or some legislative interference, the mischief which has been wrought by inevitable natural laws may be undone, and his old prosperity restored. Some still think a cure is to be found in increased security of tenure. But, waiving the question whether increased security of tenure could really do for the existing race of tenant-farmers what some of them imagine that it would, we have still to consider that there are many large landed proprietors who, sooner than part with all control over their own estates, or sink

[1] Lord Beaconsfield.

into the position of annuitants, would turn farmers themselves and solve the problem in that fashion. If the contention is true on which this demand is based — namely, that with increased security, farming could still be made profitable, even with rent to be paid—it is manifest that the landowner, whose security is absolute, who has no rent to pay, and who, in regard to capital, must, as a general rule, be in quite as favourable a position as the tenant-farmer, would be strongly tempted to try the experiment himself.

The landed proprietors of England are badly off just now, no doubt; but by their own showing the farmers are still worse off. What can *they* do with increased security of tenure, which their landlords could not do much better? Of course there is another way out of the situation, though it is not one which can be agreeable for the farmers to contemplate. If all that is wanted to restore the prosperity of English agriculture is a fair field for the safe investment of capital, the rich man may come in from the outside with more money than either landlord or tenant, and make terms with the owner which he might be only too glad to accept. Suppose the farms on any large estate to be taken up by an individual or a company as a purely commercial undertaking, many causes of friction which now exist between owner and occupier would be absent. Social jealousies, sporting jealousies, ecclesiastical difficulties would all disappear. The landlord would have whatever he chose to pay for, without any grumbling or ill-feeling. I, for one, have no desire at all to see such a change take place. I should deeply regret it. But it is one of the possibilities of the future on which the farmers would do well to ponder. If the old relations between landlord and tenant, between farmer and labourer, are all to be swept away—and I am told I am much too optimistic in expecting anything else—the consummation I have here indicated is not much more improbable than others which the landed interest has been taught to anticipate. It is a little so—because the man who was looking only to commercial results without any eye to the pleasures or the dignity of a landed proprietor, could find many more profitable investments for his money than agriculture. But still, where the landowner had only one individual to deal with, some arrangement might be made for the division of sporting rights; and it is certainly one of the contingencies which have been talked about in connection with the future of English farming.

It will be observed that there is a broad line of demarcation to be drawn between the discontent of the farmer with the existing state of things and the discontent of the peasantry. The former is due almost exclusively to the bad times, very slightly flavoured on particular estates with some traditional soreness about game. But since the Act of 1880 this feeling has almost totally disappeared, and the English farmers are even calling out for some modification of the Act, in the shape of a close time for hares. Farmers are born sportsmen; and it requires only the exercise of a little courtesy and forbearance by the landlords to secure the absence of any trouble upon this score. The mainspring of the farmer's discontent is pecuniary. He has no social ambition or social jealousy to gratify. He would be only too happy to continue to be a farmer,

and is pricked by no cravings after any higher kind of existence. The agricultural labourer is tired of being an agricultural labourer. He sighs for a different kind of life, with more excitement, more possibilities, more opportunities. The farmer's dissatisfaction springs chiefly from material causes; the labourer's from moral.

But there are certain general truths which may be predicted of both alike. Our political action is necessarily largely regulated by our material interests and our immediate wants, and the lower we descend in the social scale, the more absorbing do these wants and interests become, and the less do they admit of being modified by higher or more remote considerations. The most transient and superficial antagonism between these primary demands, and measures based on any scientific or philosophic social principle which appears to clash with them, is sufficient to condemn the latter in the minds of uneducated men. On the other hand, it is encouraging to perceive that some effort is to be made to retain the administration of the new system in the hands of the same class of men who so successfully administered the old one, and to whom unquestionably both the peasantry and the farmers still look up with much respect. The local aristocracy are everywhere coming forward to claim their proper place in the remodelled county constitution; and if their claims are recognised, as in the first instance they probably will be, much of the apprehended evil may be either averted, neutralised, or postponed.

The relations between the gentry and the farmers may not be all that could be wished; and I am assured that in some rural districts the farmers, as a rule, will assume a hostile attitude towards the magistrates under the new system which is now about to be inaugurated. I cannot speak with any certainty on this point myself; but I shall be surprised to learn that such feelings are at all general. I believe there are parts of the country where the farmers are under some vague impression that the country gentlemen might have done more for them, though goodness knows exactly what it is that they are thinking of. But I have no expectation that they will offer any organised opposition to the claims of the country gentlemen to take a principal part, as they have always done, in the management of county business, and to be looked up to by the rural population as their natural leaders. Other people may, but not the farmers. There will be isolated cases of antagonism, I have no doubt. There are rifts and flaws in the agricultural and territorial fabric, I am aware, which make me say that the relation between its component classes are not all that could be desired. But I believe that, on the whole, its main walls are still sound and solid, and that, for anything the farmers are likely to do, it may, with a few judicious repairs, weather many storms yet.

In bringing this series of sketches to a close on the eve of the elections for the first county council, I feel that I am taking an appropriate farewell of that old *régime* to which they have been principally dedicated. It may be that under the new one the distribution of power will not be materially altered, and that for many years to come the rural system of England may present an unchanged exterior. It may be so, though I am not one of those who look forward to this result with much confidence. But if the form remains, the spirit will have flown—the

moral atmosphere will be different. We have been looking back upon a past which has no doubt been a period of transition, much that still survived at the commencement of it having gradually passed away before either the county franchise or the county council came in to complete the transformation. But it is equally true that men between fifty and sixty can recall a time when the setting sun of patriarchal feudalism had not yet sunk below the horizon, and still shed a lingering glow upon the face of rural England. Our eyes have been watching its expiring beams, as they slowly faded away from one picturesque object after another, and we have only ventured to steal a few furtive glances at the evening clouds to ask what they might tell us of the morning. We have stood with our backs to the future, drinking in the sweetness of the olden time, rendered all the sweeter by the thought that it was slipping from our grasp, indulging our sympathies to the verge of intoxication, and feeling in the words of the old song that to-morrow we'd get sober. The most sanguine of us can hardly expect that such remnants of saturnian times as may still survive at this moment will outlive the new influences now brought to bear upon them, or that the little village hierarchy can be ever again what it once was. The chairman of the county council may be a country gentleman, with country gentlemen on his right and on his left. The farmers may recover their spirits, regain their equanimity, and exhibit their former common sense; the labourers may find out that the city, after all, is a bad exchange for the country, and come back again to the fields and villages. All this may happen, and yet the whole thing will be different, and the only question is whether more than all this will not happen. The past may glide away from us without any violent disruption of the old ties which still remain unbroken, or amidst a convulsive conflict leaving a legacy of feuds behind it. The show may remain when the substance has departed, or both show and substance may collapse together. But be this as it may, the 1st of January 1889 will hereafter be looked back upon as an epoch in our rural history and our national life, when we stood at the parting of the ways and said farewell to a social system of eight hundred years' duration.

T. E. Kebbel.

THE AUTUMN SESSION.

When the state of public business in August last rendered it necessary for the Government to decide upon the course which might best conduce to its satisfactory despatch, there was much doubt and anxiety in the minds of our legislators as to the decision which would be taken. To sit bravely on through the month of September might have ensured a longer and more continuous holiday, although that month would hardly have sufficed without frequent resort to the closure, which modern obstruction has rendered necessary to the transaction of parliamentary business. But human strength and human endurance have their limits, and to have continued the sittings of the House of Commons without a break would have sorely tried both, and might still have failed to secure the desired object. It was therefore probably a wise determination at which the Government arrived when they determined to adjourn Parliament in September, and have recourse to an autumn session, commencing the first week in November. Common-sense, convenience, and patriotism might have been expected to combine in the attempt to finish the remaining "estimates" without more than reasonable discussion, and to dispose of those few measures upon the principle of which all political parties seemed to be agreed, and consideration only to be required for their details.

Unfortunately, however, common-sense and patriotism are not always found where they might be expected, and the hopes of sensible and patriotic men have been disappointed in the result. It cannot be maintained that the autumn session has been wasted, because, despite the unworthy tactics of a selfish and unscrupulous Opposition, the extension of Lord Ashbourne's Act has been successfully carried through Parliament, and some few measures against which faction itself could raise no plausible opposition have been placed upon the Statute-Book. But the contrast is none the less painful between that which has been done and that which might have been done, had the welfare of the country and the credit of Parliament been placed by the Opposition before the interests of a party and the desire to damage political opponents. This, however, is not to be expected under the present unfortunate position of the Gladstonian-Parnellite section of the Liberal party: all that is respectable therein has to be subordinated to that which is the reverse, in order to hold "the party" together. The "tail is wagging the dog" with a vengeance, and Mr Gladstone and his immediate followers are obliged to acquiesce in the abandonment of parliamentary traditions of decorum, and the constant breach of the ordinary courtesies of parliamentary debate and regularity of parliamentary procedure, because, forsooth, they have come to depend for their political existence upon men to whom decorum, courtesy, and regularity are things strange and unknown.

It must, indeed, be frankly admitted that to some of them the position does not appear to be otherwise than congenial. Sir William Harcourt is always ready upon the shortest notice, and apparently with the greatest pleasure, to support and uphold the

"irrepressible" section of his party; and Sir George Trevelyan is never unwilling to display in like manner the sincerity of his regret for his temporary aberration from the paths of party into those of patriotism. But it is impossible not to believe that the more honest and fair-minded among the ex-officials and Gladstonian Liberals must, at least occasionally, view with regret the company into which they have been led, and the tactics to which they have been committed. It is not too much to say that parliamentary government, having in its extended sense been upon its trial since 1885, has been enormously discredited during the existence of the present Parliament, and that by the very men who were more than any others bound to uphold its credit—namely, the Scotch and English Radicals. The Irish Nationalist who desires, or affects to desire, the establishment of an Irish Parliament in Dublin, may consistently endeavour to discredit the British House of Commons, and obstruct its proceedings as long as the forbearance of the House permits him to do so. But it is something almost intolerable that English and Scotch Radicals, who have spent their political lives in demanding an extended franchise and the more direct representation of the people, should now be doing their utmost to prove that the result of concession to these demands has been the return to Parliament of persons who are daily showing the facility with which representative government may be rendered an impossibility.

We have long been proud of our free Parliament, but that pride has certainly been diminished by the abuse of freedom which we have witnessed in recent years—an abuse which must inevitably lead to a limitation of that freedom, and a restriction upon the individual liberty of speech which has hitherto existed. This liberty was indeed always subject to one restriction, namely, that of public opinion in the House, which, when unmistakably manifested, had formerly the invariable effect of causing the offending member to resume his seat. This, however, has long ceased to be the case, and if an "honourable member" now offends against the good taste or general feeling of the House, he generally exaggerates the offence by defying the expression of that feeling, and posing as the champion of that freedom of debate which he is practically doing his best to make impossible in the future. Thus it is that the House has to submit to its time being wasted by the Labouchères, the Conybeares, the Clarks, and the Tanners, who have been inflicted upon it by misguided constituencies, and who are in their own persons the worst enemies of representative government.

We are led to these reflections more especially by the extraordinary audacity with which this section of members have charged upon the Government the waste of public time and the mismanagement of public business during the autumn session. It speaks volumes for the toleration of the House of Commons, that Mr Labouchere should have been listened to for one moment when making this charge the subject of a motion for adjournment, in order to bring it forward in a formal and specific manner. For Mr Labouchere had not only been one of the most conspicuous occupiers of public time during the session, but had deliberately avowed his intention of making many speeches in order to prevent the progress of legislation. This open avowal, made in February 1887, must not be forgotten

when the member for Northampton prates about the waste of public time and the delay of public business. "It seemed to him," said Mr Labouchere, "that this ought to be made an educational session, and that the very best use they could turn it to was to occupy the time of her Majesty's Government as long as possible by making speeches, because the Government, if left to their own devices, could only produce what the majority of the House would consider bad legislation, and so every moment that her members did not occupy with their speeches would be devoted to a bad use." With these words fresh in our recollection, it is with a feeling akin to disgust that we see Mr Labouchere rising in his place at one of the busiest moments of the autumn session, and claiming to be heard upon a matter of "urgent public importance,"—namely, the unsatisfactory position of that public business which he had so much contributed to delay.

It must have crossed the minds of those who listened to this audacious attempt to shift the blame from the shoulders to which it really belonged, that the matter of "public importance" which most earnestly pressed at the moment was the necessity for the adoption of some means for the repression of such unworthy representatives of the people as those who seem to consider it their special mission to impede the course of useful legislation, and, *per fas et nefas*, to obstruct the Government. In speaking of Mr Labouchere, it is too much the habit to treat him as a mere jester and trifler, who does not mean half what he says, and whose words are not to be taken as seriously as those of other people. This, however, is a mistaken view on the part of those who take it. It is perfectly true that it is an audacity bordering on the ridiculous which has brought Mr Labouchere into the notoriety in which he so much delights, and that those who have known him longest and best probably attach the least value to his political utterances. But although it is Mr Labouchere's audacity which has forced him into a position in the Gladstonian-Parnellite party to which his talents do not entitle him, it is none the less true that he has attained to that position, and must be ranked among the leaders of the Opposition. Yet even such a dignity hardly entitles a man to speak, upon an average, three or four times every night, which has been something approximate to Mr Labouchere's performance during the most part of the session just concluded. He has indeed the full right to say that he was engaged in the faithful fulfilment of his undertaking to obstruct the Government; but to complain at the same time of the delay in the transaction of public business was a proceeding which, to say the least of it, bordered on inconsistency, and laid him open to the rebuke effectively administered by Mr Chaplin. The latter exposed, in the same speech, the interminable loquacity of Messrs Clark, Conybeare, and Tanner, for whom, indeed, there is even less excuse than for Mr Labouchere. Indeed, the self-sufficiency of these parliamentary nonentities would be altogether incomprehensible, if we did not recollect that in some constituencies seats are won by persistent loquacity and continuous verbosity, and the habit thus acquired during the election may be hard to relinquish within the walls of Parliament. If, however, respect for their brother members and regard for the public time have no effect in checking the undue garrulity of

these members, it is very certain that the time will not be long before the House of Commons will take the matter into its own hands, if only to save its own time and its own credit. It is quite true that a number of the superfluous speeches delivered by these and other members have been when the House had gone into "Supply," and that it is the special function of the House of Commons to review and check the national expenditure. Still, there can have been no reason why "Supply" in the present year should have required so many more days than has ever been required before, other than that which is to be found in the entire want of self-restraint and the egotistical craving after notoriety which have caused the wearisome loquacity which has produced this result. Self-restraint, indeed, is absolutely necessary if any business is to be transacted in a House of 670 members; and if it is unattainable without further restrictions, to further restrictions we must undoubtedly come.

The net result of the obstructive loquacity of which we have spoken has been the abandonment of several measures of value, for which, under ordinary circumstances, ample opportunity would have been found for even a full discussion. Indeed, the Employers' Liability Bill was actually discussed in a very full and ample manner on the 8th Dec., and a decision upon the very few disputed points might have been taken with the greatest facility. Nevertheless, this measure, which was not the child of any Government official or department, but the product of a Committee upon which the "Liberal" element predominated in the ratio of eleven to seven, was opposed by Mr Broadhurst, who filled the office of Under Secretary to the Home Office in Mr Gladstone's last Administration. Mr Broadhurst hardly concealed his primary object, namely, that a "Tory Government" should not get the credit of a measure, the object of which was to improve the position of the "employed." This view was exposed and denounced by Mr Bradlaugh in a speech of great eloquence and vigour. He declared that if a measure was good, he would not stop to consider whether it came from a Liberal or Tory Government; and he made known the curious fact, that upon some of the very points upon which Mr Broadhurst was now taking objection, that gentleman had been more than once directly applied to by the Select Committee for his opinion and advice, and had vouchsafed no reply to the application. Mr Bradlaugh, who had taken an active part upon the Committee which considered the Bill, declared that it was one which ought to be passed in the interest of the employed, and earnestly pressed that it should be proceeded with and carried. Mr Burt, who followed the lead of Mr Broadhurst in desiring its withdrawal, admitted that the Bill was an improvement upon the existing law, but declared that it did not go far enough; whilst Sir William Harcourt, as soon as he found "how the cat jumped," and that there was a chance of depriving Government of the credit of passing a useful Bill, threw his weight into the Broadhurst scale, and denounced Mr Bradlaugh and all his works.

The unreasonable nature of the opposition will be seen in a moment, when it is remembered that this Bill proposed to modify the doctrine of common employment, stopping short of abolishing it altogether, but of course in its modification facilitating future abolition, if such should hereafter recommend itself to Parliament.

Therefore those who, with Mr Broadhurst, entirely condemn the doctrine of common employment, would be nearer their goal upon this particular point; whilst with respect to the objections to the third clause, dealing with the question of insurance, there is little doubt but that they could have been met or removed if time had not been wasted in the general debate inaugurated by Mr Broadhurst. That gentleman, however, was determined that if he could only get "half a loaf," he would prefer to go without bread altogether. Indeed, he allowed himself to be so entirely guided by party feeling as to be unwilling or unable to recognise, with Mr Burt and other independent Liberals, that the Bill was a good Bill as far as it went. He thought fit to condemn it as a "sham" and a "delusion"; threw into the scale of opposition to it such weight as he may have acquired as an Under Secretary of State in the last Gladstone Government; and made it clear to the House and to the country that it is to him and his friends that the operative classes of England owe the loss of a measure devised for their benefit, attentively considered by a committee of men well acquainted with the details of the matter, and presented to Parliament with the approval of those who have the interests of the working classes at heart, and no other object than to promote sound and useful legislation on behalf of those interests. Mr Broadhurst and his friends have laid themselves open to the charge of being amongst those described by Mr Bradlaugh as persons "who, pretending to speak on behalf of the workman, tried to set the employed against the employer"; and he has prevented the settlement of a question which it is for the interests of neither to keep open, but which, through his action and that of Sir William Harcourt and others, must now be kept open for at least another year, and which can never be well and safely settled by legislation founded upon extreme views or impracticable theories. The Broadhursts of the day are too much in the habit of treating Capital and Labour as hostile forces—the one of which is to be conquered and subdued by the other—instead of dealing with them as close allies, which they are and ought to be, and whom it is the interest of the State to weld and knit together if possible, but never to alarm or alienate by over-paternal legislation.

The Employers' Liability Bill has not been the only sacrifice which has been made to Radical loquacity and obstruction. The Tithes Bill or Bills, which were reported to be the peculiar pets of the Prime Minister, had to be abandoned; the Scotch Universities' Bill shared the same fate; and it became evident, early in the autumn session, that the Government was to be allowed to pass no legislation, however useful, from which they might obtain credit in the country. The proposal to extend Lord Ashbourne's Act was a very godsend to the Anti-Legislation party, English and Irish. It mattered not a whit that the Bill was founded upon a principle to which the Opposition, alike leaders and followers, were fully and formally committed—it was of no consequence whatever that they themselves had actually proposed within the last three years a Bill which would have advanced a much larger sum for precisely the same purpose—these circumstances were not to be taken into account for a moment in the face of the shocking fact that the measure was in the hands of a "Tory

Government," that its first instalment had succeeded beyond expectation where other attempts had failed, and that further success in the same direction might not only give popularity to the Government, but even imperil that of the Land League and the "Nationalist" leaders. From these dreadful possibilities the Gladstonian-Parnellite heart shrank back affrighted and dismayed. Yet were the leaders of the Separatist party equal to the occasion and to themselves. "L'audace, toujours l'audace," would seem to be their adopted motto, and accordingly, with a celerity that would have been marvellous in other people, but to which we are becoming accustomed when we have to deal with politicians of the Gladstonian school, consistency, pledges, speeches, professions, proposed legislation, and agreement with the principles of existing legislation, were all cast to the winds together, and the former generous donors of English credit to Irish tenants were suddenly transformed into the jealous custodians of the public purse and the vigilant guardians of the British tax-payers.

To expose the inconsistency of men to whom inconsistency is as the breath of life, is as idle and useless as to refute arguments which, after they have been effectually refuted and disproved, will be again and again repeated to credulous provincial crowds, whose ears may never be reached by the refutation. It is sufficient to record the fact that the proposed advance to Irish tenants, in order to increase the number of Irish owners, was resisted to the death by the very men who have always pointed to this increase as one of the greatest desiderata for Ireland, and that the wicked Tories had to rely upon the closure to enable their tyrannous Saxon majority to inflict upon unhappy Ireland another degradation in the shape of a boon granted by the British Parliament. The Bill, indeed, became an Act, but its passage was barred and blocked by the pseudo-Nationalists and pretended friends of Ireland, and the different stages through which it had of necessity to pass were employed by the same forces to prolong the autumn session, and to prevent the passage of other measures with which the Government had intended to deal. The unnecessary prolongation of every debate, the raising of debates for which there was absolutely no occasion, the interminable questions addressed to Ministers, frequently upon points scarce worthy of the attention of a parish vestry, and altogether too frivolous to occupy the time of the Legislature —these have been the modes by which the followers and imitators of Mr Labouchere have been able to make the session comparatively barren of results.

The complaints of the offenders against the Government are much of the character of the abuse of the police by members of the criminal class, and are not worthy of a moment's consideration. We are told, indeed, that Government have taken all "private members' time." Let us ask ourselves, on the other hand, how much of public time have private members wasted by useless speeches, repetitions of the same arguments over and over again, and obstructive motions and divisions upon immaterial points, or when the sense of the majority was certain without a division? If private members have "rights," so has the British public, on whose behalf and by whose authority these members sit in Parliament. The bargain must be fairly struck; and if the sense of the House desires and requires that "time" should be at

the disposal of private members in order to enable them to air their crotchets, and propose for discussion subjects in which they or their constituents may be interested, the same sense of the House must enforce upon "private members" some restriction of exuberant loquacity, and must not allow some of the most incompetent and self-opinionated of their body to occupy and waste the public time, to the exclusion from debate of better men, and the obstruction of useful legislation. It is urged, indeed, that the Government, under the altered rules of procedure, has great powers over the debate; but it must not be forgotten that it is difficult and invidious to exercise such powers against particular members, and that if such persons continue to offend, not only against the Government but against the general feeling of the House, by their persistent interference in debate upon subjects whereupon they possess no special knowledge, and their refusal to be guided by the ordinary rules of good sense and decorum, it should be, not the Government, but the House itself, which should vindicate its own reputation and save its own time, by peremptory interference with those who continually imperil the one and waste the other. For most assuredly the country will not for ever tolerate the degradation to which the House of Commons is being led by the "irrepressibles" of the Opposition. We are a business-like people, and expect our work to be done in a business-like manner. Let us all bear in mind that if the autumn session of 1888 has failed to do the work which was expected of it, the failure is distinctly due to the loquacity, self-conceit, and disregard of public interests which have been evinced by men who, having by the display of these infirmities done much to make an autumn session necessary, have done their utmost to render it abortive by a repetition of the same display. It is in vain for the Gladstonian Press to follow Mr Labouchere's lead, and endeavour to cast the blame upon the Government. The country can and will judge for itself, and we may wait for its verdict with the utmost confidence.

One serious result may ensue from the conduct of the "irrepressibles," which Parliament will do well to contemplate. The House of Commons has already suffered in public estimation, and there can be little doubt that it will suffer still further unless it speedily evinces a capacity for self-reform, and a readiness to enter upon the task. The new Rules of Procedure have been tested, and their weak points, to some extent, discovered. One of these undoubtedly exists in the facility with which members may interrupt public business by motions with regard to matters which they consider of "urgent public importance." This facility may probably be diminished without injury to any one, and if its abuse is continued, such will undoubtedly be the ultimate result. But we must never forget the peculiar circumstances under which our system of parliamentary government is being tried at the present moment. It is the most ardent desire of a considerable section of members to prove beyond dispute that the business of the United Kingdom cannot be transacted by a united Parliament. To bring about this proof, and so ultimately to obtain the breaking-up of the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland into several local legislatures, is the aim and object of those who obey the leadership of Mr Gladstone.

although, of course, they avow their concurrent desire to be the maintenance of an "Imperial Parliament" side by side with the provincial bodies. But to make this division and breaking-up at all palatable to the public of Great Britain, it is essential to the Separatists that they should show the impossibility of the performance by the Imperial Parliament of the work which it has hitherto undertaken to perform.

With this motive and inducement to guide them, it is not surprising that the more unscrupulous amongst them should care less for the credit of the House of Commons and the character of Parliament than for the furtherance of their own ends and the enforcement of their own ideas. Therefore it is that we are constantly told by their leaders that "the Irish question stops the way." The saying has, in their mouths, a double significance: first, that whilst Home Rule is refused to the demands of Irish "Nationalists," discussion of "the reason why" requires so much time that no other question shall, as far as the Separatists are concerned, receive full and fair consideration from a Parliament which expressly represents the verdict of the country against Home Rule; secondly, that to show the necessity of Home Rule, the "way" to other legislation shall be "stopped" by wasting as much time and obstructing as many measures as can be done by a thoroughly factious Opposition. In other words, having declared that Home Rule was necessary, and having been thoroughly beaten in their appeal to the country upon the question, they are determined to prove themselves right and the country wrong by refusing to accept the verdict, and choosing rather to degrade the British Parliament and discredit its legislative capacity than acknowledge that they had taken an erroneous view of a great question, and of the manner in which that question has been viewed and decided by the British people. This is a circumstance which must not be forgotten when we are considering the "block" of parliamentary business, and the small amount of legislation effected by the autumn session. It is not only individual obstructives and the irrepressible egotism and self-sufficient conceit of individual "nobodies," but the policy of a party by which these people are sustained, and which utilises these small and unworthy instruments for its own ulterior purposes.

This naturally brings us to the reflection that the leaders of that party, and the originators of that policy, are primarily and principally responsible for all the evils of which we complain, and of the degradation of our parliamentary system. This truth they may try to conceal by an ostentatious display of readiness to "assist" Government in facilitating the despatch of public business, *after the mischief has been done.* Nobody, however, is deceived by such a transparent artifice. When further practical legislation has become impossible; when useful and popular bills, which only required possible amendment in certain matters of detail, have been withdrawn, and when everybody is longing to get away for "the Christmas holidays,"—no great effort of virtue is required from "the front Opposition bench" in order to induce them to "assist" Government in closing supply and winding up the session, which they might have rendered so much more creditable to the House of Commons, and so much more valuable to the country.

As far as concerns the principles

of "Union" or "Separation," which form the real division of parties at the present time, the contest has gone on during the autumn outside as well as within the walls of Parliament. The Unionists have indeed been singularly unfortunate in the havoc which death has made in their ranks, no less than three Unionist members having been carried off within a few weeks. Colonel Duncan, the member for Holborn, was a man greatly esteemed, and one whose death may be termed a national loss. His great military knowledge, his considerable and varied experience, his courteous manner, and the independence of his Conservatism, alike contributed to render him a valuable and respected member of the House of Commons. In 1885 Colonel Duncan had won his election by a majority of 1574, which had been increased to 1700 at the general election in the following year, when his opponent was a Hindoo lawyer of high character and position, but who was unlikely to be a strong candidate in a metropolitan borough. Mr Gainsford Bruce, on the other hand, who retained the seat for the Unionists by a majority of 965, was opposed by an exceptionally strong candidate in the person of Earl Compton. Say what they will, your English Radical loves a lord; and a lord of high character, patriotic aspirations, and philanthropic tendencies goes a great way with the mobocracy in any popular British constituency. Enormous exertions were made on his behalf, and it is not surprising that his poll exceeded by more than a thousand votes that of his two predecessors in the same field. Mr Bruce, however, who had against him nothing but the prestige of two or three defeats in the north of England, had in his favour his attachment to the Union, which is happily still a passport to the hearts of loyal Englishmen, despite the blandishments of Mr Gladstone, and the sophistries of the rump of the last Liberal Government which has joined him in his Parnellite alliance. So the seat was kept, and although the Separatists crow loudly over the diminished majority, the diminution was, under the circumstances, to be expected, and the Unionists have every reason to be satisfied with the result. The seat at Maidstone was vacated by the sudden death of the respected Conservative member, Major Ross, whose majority was 345 in 1885, reduced to 314 in the following year, when an opposition was suddenly undertaken at the last moment. It was thought and expected that there would probably be a further reduction at the present contest, the Conservative candidate, Mr Cornwallis—though a local man, and in every way eligible—being young and untried, whilst his opponent, Mr Barker, was connected with Maidstone, and reported to be a strong candidate. The result, however, was never for a moment doubtful; and although the energetic efforts made on Mr Barker's behalf were sufficiently successful to enable him to poll some five-and-twenty votes more than the Liberal candidate who started at the last moment in 1885, while Mr Cornwallis failed to reach the number polled on that occasion by the old and tried representative, Major Ross, yet the majority of 185 gave a tolerably conclusive evidence that the men of Maidstone were not disposed to separate themselves from the other constituencies of Kent, which gave a unanimous Unionist return at the general election. The case of Colchester was somewhat differ-

ent. This constituency has been proverbially fickle in its affections, and had returned Liberal members for some years previous to the general election of 1885, when its late representative, Colonel Trotter, wrested the seat from the former Liberal member. It would therefore have been no surprise if the Liberal candidate, Sir William Brampton Gurdon, who had enjoyed the advantage of being private secretary to Mr Gladstone, and had served the public with credit and ability in several capacities, had defeated his Conservative opponent. Therefore the contrary verdict of the constituency, and the victory of Lord Brooke by a majority larger by 144 votes than that by which Colonel Trotter was returned in 1886, must be hailed as a satisfactory indication that the spirit of Unionism is still alive and vigorous among the men of Essex.

It must, however, always be borne in mind that it is most unsafe to take casual or "bye" elections as an accurate indication of the general state of public feeling throughout the country. At such times the local and personal claims of a candidate have naturally more weight than when the attention of the whole body of the electorate is fixed upon some great question upon which Parliament has been dissolved. Moreover, the advocates of particular questions have less compunction in pushing them forward at single elections, by which the fate of a party or ministry is not likely to be affected, than at a moment when this is the case. "Temperance" men, "anti-vaccinators," and the upholders of half-a-dozen other crotchets, good or bad, will often vote or refuse to vote for a candidate at a bye-election on account of his views upon their pet subject; whilst at the moment of a general election they will, like sensible men, subordinate other opinions to whatever happens to be the great question of the day. It is sufficient, therefore, for us to judge from general results that the cause of the Union has not lost ground in the hearts of the British people, although the activity of our opponents is such as to show us that it is indispensable to "stand to our guns," and continually to keep before the public the gravity and magnitude of the issues which are at stake.

The most noticeable speeches which have been delivered outside the walls of Parliament during the autumn session have undoubtedly been those of Lord Salisbury during his visit to Edinburgh at the end of November. Lord Salisbury is always clear and incisive in his political utterances, and never was he more so than in those to which we call attention at this moment. His mission to Scotland was one of an important and valuable character. He came to tell home truths to people than whom none are more capable of understanding and appreciating such matters, and he came for two special objects, which it will be well for us to recall. Lord Salisbury's first object was to weld together the Liberal-Unionist and Conservative ranks, by pointing out to them the magnitude of the principles and interests involved, and the paramount necessity of subordinating all other considerations, local or personal, to the one great object of preserving the unity of the Empire. His second object was to show and prove to Scotland that it is a gross and palpable error to consider Mr Gladstone, as he has too long and too often been considered in Scotland, as the embodiment of Liberalism; that the old days of political

stagnation are past and gone; that not only are the Unionists, both Conservative and Liberal, as really and truly "progressive" as any lover of progress within the limits of the Constitution can desire, but that they are actually better representatives of "Liberalism" than Mr Gladstone, who has discarded old Liberal traditions, and is acting, in deed and in fact, not as the leader of a Constitutional party, but as the imperious dictator of followers whose creed is that of absolute and unreasoning submission to his political commands. No patriot and no true Liberal will deny the importance of these objects, and the necessity of the speedy recognition of their value and the necessity for their achievement. The alliance between Conservatives and Liberal-Unionists has been daily cementing in proportion to the enlightenment which has reached the public mind with regard to the intentions, the tactics, and the policy of their opponents. Minor differences must and will exist between Unionists, just as they must and will exist between any body of men who are bound together solely or principally by some great tie of public or private interest. But in proportion to the increasing recognition of the importance of that tie, its influence grows stronger over those whom it affects, and the existing differences between them diminish and fade away before its growing strength and urgency. Some of these differences may, by mutual consent, be left as "open questions"; some may be found, after all, to be no differences at all when association and amicable discussion have probed them to the bottom. So it is, now that the vital importance of the great principle which binds Unionists together has been fully recognised, that the alliance grows firmer and firmer every day, and tends more and more to that cordial fusion which would naturally seem to follow from identity of opinion upon the greatest subject of the day. Such a fusion, however, is not to be forced either by a party leader or a political organisation. It must be left to work out its own way, and, if it follows, will follow by a natural process, and by no external agencies.

That against which it is our duty to guard, and against which Lord Salisbury wisely warned us, is the systematic attempt of the Separatist party to persuade the Liberal section of the Unionists that their principle of union may and ought to be suspended and laid aside when some question of special interest for the moment seems to demand that "Liberals" should unite as such. Whether it be the "temperance" question, a matter of "privilege," or any other question whatever, the piteous cry goes up from the Gladstonian Liberals, having for its origin their intense desire to sow dissension in the ranks of the Unionist party. "See," they say, "here is a question which, in old days, would have ranged Liberals on one side, Conservatives on the other. How can you call yourselves 'Liberals' when, upon such a question as this, you insist upon supporting the Conservative Government?" Such an appeal, though little likely to have any effect upon those Liberal-Unionists who have weighed well the consequences of the independent and patriotic action which they have taken upon the Home Rule question, is not without its influence upon the masses, to whose minds Home Rule, with all which it implies, is not always present, and who see questions of social or political interest to themselves postponed or defeated partly by

the action of those whom they knew as Liberals before the Unionist party had to be formed in the hour of danger to the Constitution. Therefore it is well to repeat the plain and palpable reply which a Liberal-Unionist may return to such "Separatist" taunts as the above. He may with justice and truth reply in these words: "It is you, and not I, who are responsible for the postponement or defeat of that which you say is a 'Liberal' question. As long as you were content to advocate and promote reforms *within the limits of the Constitution*, I was ready to fight with you side by side, and there could only have been questions of degree between us. But when you proposed and supported a measure to subvert the Constitution, divide the Imperial Parliament, and break up the Unity of the Empire, you raised a question which, in its importance, overshadowed everything else, and which obliged me to take my stand by the side of those with whom I agree upon this question, even though I may differ from them upon other points. All other points are small and insignificant in comparison, and therefore it is you, who introduced this question, who are responsible for the postponement of other questions, which must still be postponed as long as you, in defiance of the national verdict given against you in 1886, persist in declaring that this Irish question 'stops the way'—or, in other words, that you will accept none other solution of it than your own." This answer is satisfactorily conclusive to the mind of every Unionist, and it is one which should be persistently given and explained to the constituencies. They should be made to thoroughly understand that it is the Separatist and not the Unionist party who delay reforms and prevent the discussion of "Liberal" measures, and that it is the same party who, for the further reason of their fear that the country should discover that modern Conservatism is identical with true and active Liberalism, impede legislation, misrepresent and misstate alike the actions and the measures of their opponents, and try to palm themselves off as genuine Liberals, when they have really brought themselves to the condition of servile followers of a Dictator who has led them far away from the old "Liberal" creed.

This is the truth—or one of the principal truths—which Lord Salisbury came to inculcate, and it is one which every Scotchman should strive to spread abroad and drive home to the hearts of his countrymen. It has often seemed marvellous that Mr Gladstone should have maintained the hold upon the people of Scotland which he has undoubtedly possessed. It was explicable, indeed, to some extent, so long as he represented Liberalism, and the Liberalism of a united party. But now that he represents something very different, and has allied himself with men who, in character, in political creed, and in almost every essential, are as different as possible from the wise and far-seeing people of the north, it is hard to understand that his influence can any longer attract the latter to the standard of disunion which he has raised. That this is the true description of the Gladstonian standard it is impossible to deny. Under it fight the men who have openly advocated separation from Great Britain, and who have declared that "they would never lay down their arms till the *full measure* of their rights was conceded,"—that "full measure" having been defined, not as the restricted legislative body proposed

by Mr Gladstone in 1885, but as "a native Parliament in the Irish capital, to take charge of the interests and watch over the destinies of the Irish people."[1] These are not the doctrines of the prudent and cautious inhabitants of Scotland. They are far beyond that legitimate demand for improved local self-government which Scotland herself may desire, and which she will infallibly obtain from the United Parliament when her desires have been ascertained and formulated. But with the wild "Home Rule" notions of Messrs Parnell, Sullivan, & Co. Scotchmen have no sympathy, and the more the question is discussed and understood in Scotland, the stronger will grow the loyal party of the Union.

Considering the loyalty for which Scotland and Scotchmen are distinguished, it is indeed extraordinary, as it is melancholy, to reflect that it is upon Scotch support that the Separatists mainly rely, and in Scotland that Mr Gladstone's lieutenants are always boasting that his strength is to be found. In this connection Lord Salisbury gave utterance to words which may well be laid to heart by those who love Scotland and respect the opinion of the inhabitants :—

"It is to you, Scotchmen, above all others, that we appeal. Resistance to the Unionist party bases itself upon the sympathy which it obtains in Scotland. If Scotland once could come to a sense of the really inevitable issue of this struggle; if Scotland once could come to a knowledge of the dangers with which men of her own race and religion are threatened in Ireland; if that feeling could once penetrate to the hearts of the people of Scotland, and they could give their decisive and distinct vote against this movement, which is contrary to the tendency of the age, contrary to all real progress, which is trying to beat back against the stream of time, I am convinced that if this verdict was once given by Scotland, the Home Rule party would dissolve."

It will be well for Scotchmen to lay to heart these words, and to consider whether, in their truth and in their weight, they are not worth tenfold the consideration which is deserved by the sarcastic sophistries of a Lord Rosebery, the inexplicable inconsistencies of a Sir George Trevelyan, or the paradoxical philosophy of a John Morley. These are the three principal orators who have perambulated Scotland as the champions of the Separatist policy which is not to separate — the disunion scheme which is not to disunite. Read any of their speeches during the last three years, and, after the perusal, take up the speeches of Lord Salisbury at Edinburgh on the 29th and 30th of November last, and the contrast between rhetorical artifice on the one side, and plain common-sense upon the other, cannot but strike the most casual observer.

One great advantage was doubtless possessed by Lord Salisbury which his opponents have not been permitted to enjoy. Lord Salisbury was advocating the maintenance of the Union and the preservation of the unity of the Empire. That is a clear and definite policy; and the cry raised by the Separatist party against the Unionists, that they have "no policy," is idle and absurd. It is the want of a policy on their own side which places them at a disadvantage when approaching the question of Home Rule. Mr Gladstone has once applied the principle of Home Rule to practical legislation, and the result has been to drive him from office, and

[1] Mr T. D. Sullivan, late Lord Mayor of Dublin, speech at Mullingar, June 1, 1884, after which he was entertained by Mr Gladstone at Hawarden.

to shatter his political following, heretofore called the "Liberal party." What policy has he since announced as an alternative to that which was attended with such disastrous consequences? None whatever. Therefore it is idle to talk about "trusting the people of Ireland," and giving "self-government to the Irish people"; and when such high-sounding phrases are found in the mouths of the perambulating Pharisees who exalt themselves and Mr Gladstone as the only true friends of Ireland, sensible people see at once that either they are sheltering themselves behind vague professions because they have no substantial and practical policy to announce, or they have a policy behind which may be practical and substantial indeed, but which is unlikely to commend itself to the sound judgment of the people of Great Britain.

Lord Salisbury's speech to the Primrose League at Edinburgh was full of sound, practical common-sense. It called things by their right names, and "showed-up" the fallacies and misstatements of the Gladstonian-Parnellite party in a manner at once convincing and satisfactory to all those who heard or read it. The attempt to identify the cause of the Irish tenant with that of the Scotch crofter—to represent men who had wilfully broken the ordinary law as "political offenders"—to undervalue and deride the Unionist feeling of the Ulster Presbyterians—and to kindle a fictitious sentiment of sympathy with men who, having encouraged others to enter upon practices which inevitably led to imprisonment or other punishment, set up a howl of piteous despair as soon as they were themselves overtaken by justice,—all these miserable pretences were exposed and denounced by Lord Salisbury in trenchant words, and must have carried conviction to the hearts of the audience which had the good fortune to hear him.

With regard to the treatment of political offenders, Lord Salisbury especially pointed out that this class of men were not treated with special kindness in other countries, and that their claim to exceptional consideration rests upon a slender basis. But does any one ever seriously think what that claim really is with regard to the imprisoned Irish "leaders" or members of Parliament? It is not the claim of men who have boldly risen against a Government to which they denied themselves to be rightly subject, or who have conspired against a dynasty whose rule they deemed to be illegitimate or unjust. It is the claim of men who have lived and prospered under the British Government; some of whom have so far acquiesced in the form of government under which we live as to have consented to be elected to and serve in the Imperial Parliament, and who have afterwards—all the while claiming and receiving the protection of the laws of that Parliament—deliberately offended against those laws, and incurred the penalty of such offence. It is of course absolutely legitimate for any individual who disapproves of a law to agitate for its repeal; no one could wish to deny such a right to any man. But to live under, and actually, by becoming a member of Parliament, to take a share in the government of a country and then break its ordinary law, is not the act of a political offender but of a common law-breaker; and it would be utterly preposterous and absurd to invest such a person with a character which might just as well be claimed by the ordinary pickpocket who (no doubt conscientiously) objects to the law which forbids

the picking of pockets. This, however, is the contention of the Separatists, endorsed by Mr Gladstone among other extraordinary doctrines which he seems to have swallowed along with the Home Rule "bolus" which he bolted after the election of 1885.

Perhaps even more remarkable than Lord Salisbury's Edinburgh speeches has been the speech of this veteran parliamentary chieftain delivered at Limehouse before his departure for Italy. This speech may well be called remarkable, for a very different reason from that on account of which the epithet has been applied to the speeches of the Prime Minister. The Limehouse speech seems really to have been made for the purpose of embodying every fallacy, every commonplace platitude, and every misstatement which have been advanced by the Separatists during the last few months. There, prominent as usual among his most unfounded assertions, we find once again the deliberate misstatement that "our opponents decline all reference to history. Their maxim is, 'Shut your eyes'; and irrational as that maxim must appear, and irrational as it is, yet, when considered with reference to the end they have in view, every reference to history must be fatal to their view." When we consider that Mr Gladstone's own references to history have been shown, in the pages of this magazine as well as elsewhere, to have been perversions of historical fact, misconstructions of political events, and in many cases absolutely unreliable, it is inconceivable to imagine the effrontery with which he again and again persists in charging his opponents with disregarding or ignoring that history to which they confidently appeal for the utter exposure of the perversions and fallacies which he has imposed upon his countrymen as historical truth.

It is of a par, however, with the rest of the Limehouse speech, that this gross libel upon his political opponents should be reiterated by Mr Gladstone. For the same speech repeats the charge against the Government of having "wasted the time of the House." He condemns the use of "the closure"—a measure which has been forced upon a reluctant Government by the delinquencies of his own friends; he declares that the powers of closing a debate, given by Parliament, "have not been fairly used" by the Government; and he actually goes the length of asserting that the Government "have received an amount of forbearance from the Irish National party, and an amount of positive assistance from the Opposition generally, such as it would be totally impossible to find an example of at any period when Liberals have been in Government and the Tories have been in Opposition." After this, one can no longer wonder at other eccentricities which appear in the same speech. The reckless misdescription of Lord Ashbourne's Bill as—"a Bill to give to *every bad landlord in Ireland the power of compelling* every tenant who is in arrear with his existing rent either to be evicted or to purchase on terms which the landlord may choose to dictate," &c., is of a piece with the rest of the performance, and especially with the allusion to "the *moderate, attainable, practical, and thoroughly constitutional policy* known to us by the name of Home Rule." This last sentence is said to have been received with "loud and prolonged cheers" by the Limehouse audience which listened to this "remarkable" speech. One is led to wonder how many of the audience had any tangible idea of what the

speaker intended by the "practical" policy of Home Rule. It is just the "practical" part which the "old parliamentary hand" keeps carefully to himself, being well aware that it is the *impracticability* of his last scheme which wrecked it and his party together, and that this "impracticability" is an inherent part of the policy which he seeks to force down the throats of the British people.

It must be confessed that the Limehouse oration dealt with many and various subjects besides that of Ireland. Prominent among these was the "one man, one vote" question, upon which it is to be regretted that Mr Gladstone did not take the opportunity of correcting and apologising for the gross and somewhat foolish mistake into which he fell at Birmingham. It is not Mr Gladstone's habit to correct his mistakes—and perhaps he is right, after all, since the employment would occupy much of his spare time, and might seriously trench on more congenial and more profitable work. The error in this case should, however, be made known as widely as possible. Mr Gladstone was inveighing, in one of his first speeches at Birmingham in the autumn, against the wicked owners of property who had votes in two, three, or more counties, and thus swamped the resident voters. He declared that there were, according to parliamentary returns, about 580,000 of these miscreants; that they were Tories in the proportion of some 4 to 1; and that therefore if, by a Gladstonian process of arithmetic, you deducted these votes from each side at the polls of 1886, there were actually more Gladstonian voters than votes for the Unionist party. Now mark the simple correction of this extraordinary blunder, as furnished shortly afterwards, in a letter to the 'Times,' by Mr Thomas Nicolls Roberts, one of the most painstaking and intelligent of registration agents, who up to a short time since conducted the registrations for the Liberal party. There are, says Mr Roberts, about 580,000 owners upon the county registers of England. But these, in the first place, include *all owners—i.e.*, not only men who live in one country and have property in another, but all people, small or great, *who live upon their own freeholds.* This probably takes about 400,000 out of Mr Gladstone's 580,000; and unless he means to contend that a man is worth more as a voter if he only occupies, and does not own, the place where he dwells, these people are outside his argument. Nay, more, the Liberal strength in counties has always been held to be among the small freeholders, and therefore, if Mr Gladstone thinks an owner less qualified than an occupier, it is upon the Liberals and not upon the Tories that his malediction descends. But that is not all. Out of the remaining 180,000 Mr Roberts computes that about 100,000 consist of people who live in represented towns, and have votes for the county also. These also can hardly be said to belong only to the "Tory," or indeed to the landowning class. There remains to Mr Gladstone, therefore, for the purposes of his argument, only 80,000 out of his 580,000—and of these Mr Roberts tells us that, as an old electioneerer, he has generally found the proportion of Conservative to Liberal voters not 4 to 1, but about 6 to 4 as an average. Mr Gladstone has therefore founded a strong argument in favour of his "one man, one vote" theory upon a statement utterly misleading and fallacious, and yet, when again putting forward his theory, he has not the

grace or the fair-play to withdraw and apologise for such an astounding mistake. *Ex uno disce omnes.* Where one statement has proved to be absolutely unreliable, the public may be excused for doubting the reliability of the rest.

No doubt it is the eagerness and enthusiasm of Mr Gladstone which leads him too hastily to adopt as accurate statements which are furnished to him in support of his particular theories. But eagerness and enthusiasm in the leader of a party require to be tempered by moderation and discretion. This arithmetical bungle would never have been made by Mr Gladstone if he had consulted registration experts, nor would the ridiculous position in which he was placed by the Dopping incident have ever been attained if he had been more cautious in ascertaining facts before making assertions. We would even go so far as to express a hope that his repeated assertion of the refusal of the Unionists to refer to history would not be made if it were not that it is not his habit to read what other men have said or written. In that case, however, he must be held guilty of an inexcusable neglect when dealing with such an important matter. The only plausible solution of the difficulty would seem to be, that Mr Gladstone is unable to see, hear, or understand anything which militates against an idea and belief which have once taken possession of his mind; that everything and every person not favourable to that belief and idea seem to him *ipso facto* to become and to remain immoral, perverse, and wrong-headed; and that thus he can only perceive events and judge of men by a Home Rule light, which renders everything indistinct and obscure to his mental vision. It is a strange and harsh solution at best; but harsh as it seems, it is the kindest and most charitable which can be devised on behalf of a statesman who reiterates oft-refuted inaccuracies, repeats exploded fallacies, perverts plain facts of history, and all the time acts and speaks as if public virtue and political worth were only to be found amongst those who have accepted his latest policy, and enrolled themselves among his personal adherents. Mr Gladstone's speech at Limehouse may be considered as the closing effort of the autumn campaign, and the requiem of a session which he and his allies have succeeded in spoiling only in a degree less than they have attained the object of damaging themselves and destroying the remnants of their political reputation.

Meanwhile the vigorous and able speeches of Lord Derby and Lord Hartington at Liverpool have once more explained and thoroughly indicated the Unionist position. The clear common-sense of Lord Derby has exposed to the world the true state of the case as regards "Home Rule," and the separation of Parliaments and interests which would inevitably follow its adoption by the "United Kingdom." Lord Hartington has again justified the conduct of the Liberal Unionists, destroyed the sophistries directed against them by Gladstonian orators, and torn to pieces the flimsy charges of misgovernment of Ireland and mismanagement of public business, by which they have endeavoured to justify their factious opposition to a Government which is steadily and resolutely bent upon carrying out the mandate of the country at the last general election.